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CD32

GAMER



ISSUE ONE
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playable

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TFX & INFERNO
INSIDE YOUR CD32
EXCLUSIVE: LIBERATION
PLAYERS GUIDE
THE FUTURE OF CD32:
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH
DAVID PLEASANCE

REVIEWED

THE LOST VIKINGS
MICROCOSM
SENSIBLE SOCCER
LIBERATION
NICK FALDO'S
CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF

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T

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X



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PC CD-ROM

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DIGITAL IMAGE DESIGN



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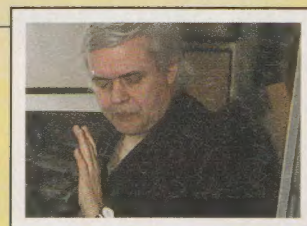
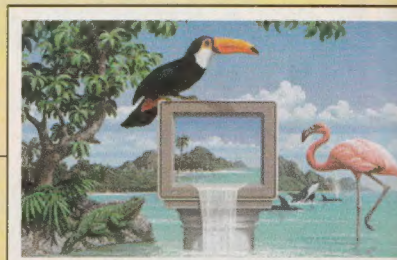
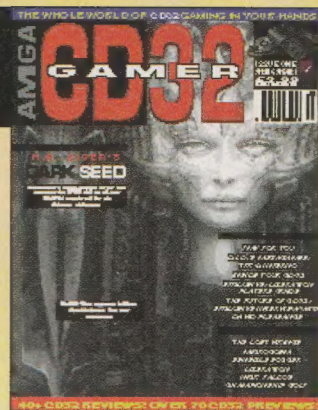
That Jason Holborn bloke takes apart his CD32. Nutter?

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HR Giger's *Alien* is available from Titan Books, £071 620 0200, priced £14.95.



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ADVERTISING MANAGER: ian kenyon SENIOR AD SALES: diana monteiro SALES EXECUTIVES: alan walton/yvonne mitchener
ADVERTISING PRODUCTION: jane hawkins/christa fairchild
PRODUCTION MANAGER: di tavener PUBLISHER: richard monteiro
RECEPTIONIST: paula wood SUBS/MAIL ORDER: karen sharrock 0202 299900
COVER ARTWORK: © 1974 h. r. giger - work no.251 "li II" (1974).

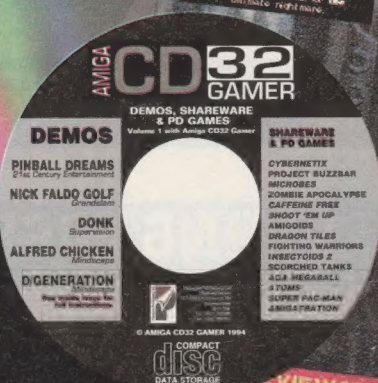
PRINTED IN THE UK BY: cradley print LTD, warley, west midlands DISTRIBUTOR: seymour international press, windsor house, 1270 london road, norbury, london sw16 4dh 081 6791899
ISSN: 9771353484014



cd guide

SEE FOR YOUR SELF!

WARNING!
NEVER BEFORE
HAS SO MUCH
ENTERTAINMENT
BEEN CRAMMED
ONTO ONE
BARGAIN
PRICE CD!



**CHECK OUT SOME OF THE LATEST RED HOT
TITLES FOR YOURSELF, BY SLAPPING
AMIGA CD32 GAMER'S
COVERMOUNT CD INTO YOUR MACHINE AND
READING OUR GUIDE TO THESE GREAT
PLAYABLE DEMOS...**

The Playable Demos...

D/GENERATION

ALFRED CHICKEN

PINBALL FANTASIES

**NICK FALDO'S
CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF**

TROLLS

First, get egg on your face in

DONK

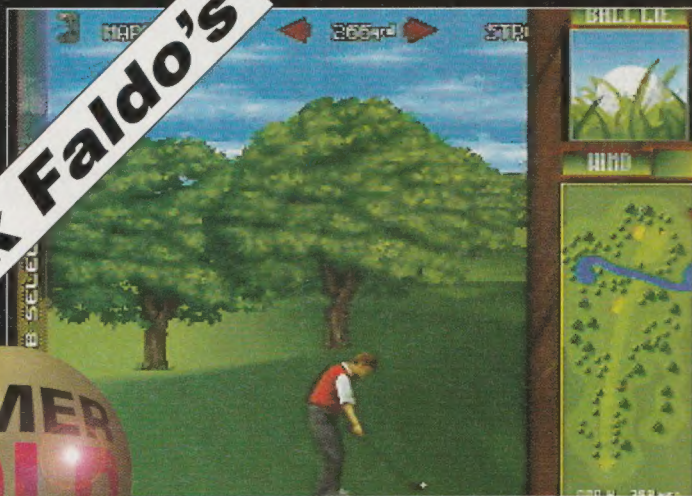
**SPECIAL
EDITION**

(SUPERVISION)

It's such a special edition, we haven't even seen it ourselves! But don't you fret, we're reliably informed that our super demo will be superb, so just get playing.

STORY: Who'd be stupid enough to have a name like Donk? How about a Samurai Duck with a sidekick called Juggs Judo Duck? Yep, it's cutesy platform time again with this humongous, 112 level, ten world classic. Each of the levels can either be played solo, or in simultaneous two-player mode with a split-screen display. You can log onto a Computer Map when you're lost and the finished game includes a save game option.

GAME: Your objective on this single-level demo is to find the exit. If things get tough you can activate an 'egg-shell' shield or drop blat-em-all eggy bombs. To help find the elusive exit you can even turn into an inflatable duck.



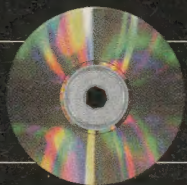
(GRANDSLAM)

Whip your a club from your caddie and potter onto the first hole of Grandslam's superb golfing game. A Gamer Gold no less!

STORY: Well, no disrespect to this super game, but there isn't much of a story, really. You just potter about, admiring the scenery and...well, wallop your ball about. Have you got a problem with that?

GAME: Alright, for the last time. POTTER ABOUT AND WALLOP YOUR BALL TOWARDS THE PIN. There's spin, wrist snap, loads of clubs to pick from and plenty to learn, so I suggest you skip to my excellent review of this game on page 51. Be warned, this game is so engrossing and challenging, you might never get to the next demo!

CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF



cd guide

...lay an egg with

(MINDSCAPE)

STORY: Do I really have to do this? Oh, all right. Evil aliens by the name of the Meka-Chickens have 'eggnapped' Billy and his brothers for evil genetic experiments! It's a mission, obviously, for a stumpy little chicken by the name of Alfred...

GAME: Fortunately, gameplay just about manages to make up the scenario. It's yet another platformer with the objective being to find collect all the balloons on the level, which will result in our beaky hero being carried off to the next one.



ALFRED CHICKEN

then get lost in the vastness of...

(MINDSCAPE)

STORY: Genoq is a world-spanning mega-corporation whose Singapore labs have been engaged in researching Neogen organisms. It might not seem all that interesting to you as you arrive on its roof, courier package in hand, but when the security doors seal you inside it becomes rather critical. The D/Generation of Neogens has broken free, imprisoning numerous hostages.

GAME: The game starts with you on the 80th floor, and your objective on the 90th. On each floor you have to collect keycards, opening doors as you search for the entrance to the next level. The demo gives you just a single floor. Your first objective is to find a gun, without which you won't last for long. After that, you can start rescuing hostages although they won't talk with you until the screen they're trapped on is completely cleared of aliens.

Top Left Button: Calls up Options Menu. Use the D-pad to highlight an item, Red button to select. Press the Top Left Button again to return to the game.

Top Right Button: As above, but with Inventory Menu.

Green Button: Talk to nearby character.

Red Button: Fires laser (if you've got one).

Blue Button: Throws grenade (if you've got one).

Yellow Button: Shows your game stats.



D/GENERATION

...before brushing up your quiff to play

(MICROVALUE)

STORY: Well, you are a cute Troll thing, with a cheeky, pert rump and an outrageously attractive quiff, and you've got to waddle about rescuing all the mini-Trolls who are scattered around the place.

GAME: I've done it again, haven't I. Blurted it all out too soon. Well, for more info, get to my review on page 42. Time for an extra screen shot, methinks.



TROLLS

now flip out in the surreal world of

PINBALL FANTASIES

(21ST CENTURY ENTERTAINMENT)

STORY: Get real, it's a pinball game!
GAME: The finished game has four splendid, 256 colour pinball tables with a great CD soundtrack. As this four minute, single table demo shows, the play mechanics have been perfectly refined for complete addictivity.



P.D. MEGA-GAMES!!!

SO MUCH FUN IT'S CRIMINAL!

AMIGA **CD32** GAMER

DEMOS, SHAREWARE
& PD GAMES
Volume 1 with Amiga CD32 Gamer

DEMOS

PINBALL DREAMS
21st Century Entertainment

NICK FALDO GOLF
Grandslam

DONK
Supervision

ALFRED CHICKEN
Mindscape

D/GENERATION
Mindscape

See inside issue for
full instructions.

SHAREWARE & PD GAMES

CYBERNETIX
PROJECT BUZZBAR
MICROBES
ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE
CAFFEINE FREE
SHOOT 'EM UP
AMIGOIDS
DRAGON TILES
FIGHTING WARRIORS
INSECTOIDS 2
SCORCHED TANKS
AGA MEGABALL
ATOMS
SUPER PAC-MAN
AMIGATRATON



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COMPACT
disc
DATA STORAGE

CYBERNETIX

Remember the arcade coin-op classic *Defender*? If you still hanker for the days when gaming fun cost 10p a go, then *Cybernetix* is for you. Programmed by the guys at Vision Software, *Cybernetix* is a shareware game that combines the great gameplay of *Defender* with the sort of arcade quality graphics that only the Amiga CD32 makes possible. Like the arcade classic, the aim of the game certainly won't tax your brain too much – blast everything onscreen but be careful as the locals will certainly fight back. *Cybernetix* uses standard left/right/up/down and fire controls.

PROJECT BUZZBAR

Project BuzzBar was originally written to demonstrate the programming language *Blitz Basic 2* which has been causing quite a storm on the keyboard-based Amigas of late. Despite this, *BuzzBar* is still a damned good game in its own right. Featuring silky smooth hardware scrolling and some very fast gameplay, *BuzzBar* should keep you entertained into the early hours of quite a few mornings to come.

Like all shoot-'em-ups, the basic idea is to kill everything that moves by flying your ship around the scrolling moonscape, intercepting the alien hordes that are stupid enough to try and engage you. You may occasionally see a little stricken spaceman float past your craft. Don't shoot these guys as they're on your side – pick them up by flying into them and you'll get a bonus for being so considerate. Once again, the controls are pretty standard – up, down, left and right to control your craft's movements and the red button to give the aliens a taste of your laser cannons. *(There's more...)*



cd guide

MICROBES

Designing advanced weaponry that can blast alien spacecraft to smithereens is all very well and good, but mankind has always faced a much greater enemy – microorganisms, small but deadly lifeforms that swarm and multiply in a drop of water (coo, I feel like Richard Burton!). *Microbes* is a high action arcade game that pits mankind against our microscopic cousins, bacteria. By moving a gun around a circular specimen dish using the left and right buttons on your CD32's controller, your job is to blast those one-celled creeps before they can multiply...

Get to it!

ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE (Mouse Required)

After years of constant exposure to the likes of 'Beadle's About' and 'Home and Away', the entire population of Britain have turned into zombies (some would argue that it happened long ago!). With foam er... foaming from their mouths and facial hair aplenty (zombies don't shave), the zombies have turned Britain into a 'no go' area (a bit like Scunthorpe on a Saturday night, really). Not wanting the epidemic to spread any further, the TV producers have shot Jeremy Beadle and drowned the cast of 'Home & Away' (about time too!) but who's going to clean up the streets of Blighty? Yep, you've guessed it – muggins.

With a mouse controller connected to port 1 on your CD32, your job is to kill as many zombies as you can by moving the onscreen gunsight over the zombies and letting rip with your machine gun by pressing the left mouse button. For a bit of extra destructive power, press the right mouse button to throw a grenade. Occasionally you may see a chest float down the screen, shoot these to collect extra ammo and grenades. Good shooting!

CAFFEINE FREE SHOOT 'EM UP

What? Another great shoot 'em up? Could it be possible? Err... yes. It may have a very strange name (the programmer is apparently a great fan of Caffeine Free coke!), but there's nothing strange about the gameplay – in true *Scramble* fashion, you've got to fly through alien territory blasting any ships that are sent out to intercept you. So without further ado, jump into your spaceship, strap yourself in and – with a war cry of 'Aargh!!! I'll get you b****ds!!!!' – let's get stuck into those aliens! Game on, dudes!

AMIGOIDS

So far we've had CD32 versions of *Defender*, *Tetris* and *Scramble*, but what about *Asteroids*? Not wanting to upset all you *Asteroids* fans, CD32 GAMER is proud to present *Amigoids*, an absolutely brilliant conversion of the arcade classic. After dropping off to sleep in your deep space explorer ship, you're suddenly woken by the sound of alarms only to realise that your ship has drifted right into the centre of an asteroid belt. Han Solo may be able to fly between those rocks, but your only hope of survival is to destroy the asteroids. All that rock isn't going to just disappear, however – each time an asteroid is blasted, it splits into two smaller chunks which fly past you at an even greater rate. Just keep blasting them until there's nothing left.

DRAGON TILES (Mouse Required)

The ancient Chinese were a strange lot. Whereas your modern day lay-about would be quite happy to just well... lay about, the Chinese invented a game called Dragon Tiles which they played to wile away the hours. The basic idea is to remove all the tiles from the board by clicking on pairs of tiles. Each pair must be of the same type (two swords or two 'ying-yangs', for example) and both must have an empty space (therefore making it possible for them to slide out of the pile) to either their left or right. This is definitely one for the more thoughtful gamer!

FIGHTING WARRIORS

Jean Claude Van Damme? Pah! Bruce Lee? Girl's blouse! Chuck Norris? What a wimp! So you think you're pretty hard do ya? Well, you'd had better be pretty nifty with your fists and feet if you're going to last just a single round in this brilliant PD beat 'em up, *Fighting Warriors*! The basic idea is to fight your way through round upon round of beat-'em-up action in this brilliant 'one on one' martial arts extravaganza. Hiiiiya!!!!

Fighting Warriors is a one player only game so, unfortunately, it isn't possible to battle it out with a friend. Just like its commercial relations, *Fighting Warriors* uses some very complex control combinations to access the wide range of moves available. Full details of these moves are displayed when the game is first loaded so read them carefully before attempting to take on an opponent.

INSECTOIDS 2

If you want very fast arcade action, then look no further than *Insectoids 2*, another PD game skillfully crafted using Acid Software's *Blitz Basic 2*. *Insectoids* is a brilliant version of the arcade coin op *Galaxians* which is very short on plot (some slimy aliens are trying to kill you so you decide to kill them), but very, very high on playability. Arcade veterans should also be pleasantly surprised by the sound effects!

MOUSE MATTERS

Some of the games on the CD32 GAMER disk require a mouse to play them. If you don't already own a mouse, you may want to consider buying one in order to play these games, as well as full price games such as *Liberation* which are more accessible with a rodent than a joypad. Any standard Amiga mouse will do – these can be picked up for around £15 from any good computer store or mail order advertiser.

SCORCHED TANKS (Mouse Required)

Scorched Tanks is one of those games that has that elusive quality that will keep you (and up to three friends!) glued to your CD32 for hours on end. The basic idea is that each player controls their own tank which is dug in on a randomly generated landscape. Each player takes it in turn to attempt to destroy the other players by firing shots at their tanks. Hitting your opponent's tank isn't that easy, however, as you need to calculate the exact power and angle of the shot. If the shot falls short, for example, then you may have to increase the power and so on.

AGA MEGABALL (Mouse Required)

Even in these days of advanced gaming hardware, games programmers still can't escape from the classic gaming genres. Already we've seen several examples of this – *Amigoids* and *Cybernetix* being just two. *MegaBall* is a brand spanking new version of the classic arcade game *Break Out* that flaunts some of the best graphics yet seen in a *Break Out* game. Taking full advantage of the CD32's 'AGA' graphics chips, *MegaBall* is as pretty to look at as it is fun to play. The basic idea is to remove all the blocks from the top of the screen by hitting them with a little ball. You control a little platform at the bottom of the screen that is used to 'bounce' the ball back towards the blocks whenever it is rebounded towards your platform. Sounds pointless? Well, maybe it is, but it's damned good fun nonetheless!

ATOMS

A puzzle game for one to four players, this rewrites Othello for the videogame age. A game to get all the family plotting against each other in fierce competition.

SUPER PAC-MAN '91

This takes one of the world's most successful videogames and brings it bang up to date in a brilliant and highly playable CD32 version.

AMIGATRATON

This fun game loosely inspired by Solitaire will really put your tactical and memory skills to the test.

LLAMATRON

Unfortunately, due to technical problems this game will not function properly. Hopefully, a new version will be included on our next disk.

TRANSPLANT

Once again technical problems – at 500Mb this is one of the biggest CD32 disks ever – meant this game will not work properly.

PD OR SHAREWARE?

Most of us naturally expect to have to pay for new games to play on our CD32's, but you don't have to pay for all software. Many of the games on this issue's cover mounted CD are what the techies call 'public domain' – that is, free of charge. Don't worry, there's no catch – many games programmers put their games into the public domain simply to advertise their talents and to give you, the user, some great games to play on your CD32.

Some of the games on the disk don't quite fall into the public domain category, however. Labelled 'shareware', these games should be treated more like commercial games. Although you're allowed to copy and pass around shareware games, the programmers of these games request that you send them a small donation if you decide that you like the game. Although you won't be breaking the laws by not paying your shareware fee, paying up will encourage the programmer to produce more great shareware games.

EDITORIAL

welcome to the REVOLUTION

After a long period of relative stability, the world of videogaming has been thrown into confusion by a host of revolutionary new technologies: 32-bit CPUs, MPEG Full Motion Video and CD-ROM Drives. CD32 is Commodore's attempt to bring together all these innovations in one high-power, low cost box. And against all the odds, it seems to be succeeding. Videogames hardware is a notoriously risky business and Commodore's previous consoles, the C64GS and CDTV, both flopped badly. Unsurprisingly, when CD32 was launched after a nine month crash development period, software houses were wary of giving support – especially with the booming cartridge market. But after solid Xmas sales, and plummeting sales for cartridges, that's all changing. System 3's Mark Cale calls dropping Amiga development for SNES one of his biggest mistakes, and all the company's new projects will be lead developed on the A1200/CD32.

While the number of CD32 games available at launch was tiny, this is rapidly changing with a deluge of conversions of past and present Amiga hits. Some will complain at the scarcity of CD32-specific titles, however these sort of games take a long time to develop and unlike Jaguar or 3DO owners, CD32 gamers are at least assured a strong supply of games. Since the Amiga has had some of the most innovative and playable games ever, this is great news and of course most future A1200 games, like the excellent *TFX* and *Inferno* previewed pages 55-57, are being developed with CD32 very much in mind.

So far, CD32 coverage has been limited to a handful of pages in the back of Amiga magazines. We believe this brave new format deserves better than this and CD32 GAMER is totally dedicated to this exciting new machine, reviewing all games from the standpoint of CD32 owners with special sections detailing the changes from previous times, plus how well the games use the CD32 and CD access times. It's a brave new world and I hope you stick with us as we explore it.

■ Stuart Wynne, Editor.

MONITOR MAN MURDERED!



The recent attempt by the UK's videogames industry, as represented by ELSPA, to provide a game rating system has run into trouble. The dire cutesy character meant to symbolise the initiative has been dropped just weeks after being unveiled, and the ratings themselves may face the same fate as Monitor Man. Nintendo and Acclaim are leading resistance, arguing that any system needs to be worldwide which seems to mean American led. In the US controversy over Sega's banal *Night Trap* has led to Sega setting up its own classification system, while US Senators and industry leaders attempt to provide an organisation which will issue ratings for all new releases.

On the whole, software companies are in favour of ratings which could allow the industry to develop a more mature image. Cyberdream's Patrick Ketchum is very much looking forward to ratings, his company is aimed at a 20-40 year-old target audience and *Dark Seed II* is likely to push the boundaries of graphic horror even further, aiming at either a 15 or 18 rating. Other producers are more wary, recently Sensible Software's Jon Hare lambasted the industry for its unwillingness to publish games dealing with real life issues. He pointed out that companies typically refuse even to allow games to refer to real people, such as Mrs Thatcher, for fear of causing offence. ■

CHARTS

1. LIBERATION	Mindscape	£34.99
2. LABYRINTH OF TIME	EA	£24.99
3. SENSIBLE SOCCER	Renegade	£24.99
4. SEEK & DESTROY	Mindscape	£25.99
5. ZOOL	Gremlin	£29.99
6. PIRATES! GOLD	MicroProse	£29.99
7. PINBALL FANTASIES	21st Century Ent	£32.99
8. WHALE'S VOYAGE	MicroValue	£29.99
9. NICK FALDO GOLF	Grandslam	£34.99
10. FIRE FORCE	Ice	£29.99



CHARTS
COMPILED
BY
GALLUP

CD32 COIN-OPS!

Aapanese coin-op maker Namco is leading a tide of arcade companies interested in CD32 technology. In an exclusive CD32 GAMER interview, David Pleasance hinted numerous coin-op makers were eager to put games onto CD32 "because it allows them to do a good representation of their arcade titles." He refused to name names since negotiations were still underway, but Namco has revealed it is definitely involved.

Namco owns the world's largest chain of arcades and has long been a front-runner in developing coin-ops. Its most recent release is the stunning *Ridge Racer*, a race game with near photographic quality polygon graphics. Although there are no plans, as yet, to convert *Ridge Racer*, past-hits such as the spectacular *Starblade* are under active discussion. *Starblade* is a brilliant sci-fi shoot-'em-up which was a major source of inspiration for *Starwing*, although obviously even a SNES with a Super FX chip could hardly match the coin-op's fantastic graphics. The CD32 conversion would make heavy use of its CD-ROM technology, in similar fashion to a nearly finished Mega-CD version, but would obviously be far superior given its technological edge. ■



CD32 RISING

CD has been the format of the future for years, but established formats such as the Mega-CD, PC CD-ROM and CD-i have grabbed only a tiny proportion of overall game sales. Now CD32's arrived it's finally taking off, rising from 2.6% pre-Xmas to 3.7% in January. Unsurprisingly, CD32 has played a large part in that, zooming up to second place in the CD format wars just behind the fast falling Mega-CD.

The reason for its success isn't hard to find. Amiga games continue to set the pace for game innovation, *Cannon Fodder* and *Syndicate* both being nominated for most Original Game and Computer Software Game of the Year. The CD32-only *Liberation* was also nominated for Best CD Game, while *Frontier: Elite 2* was up for Software Game of the Year, Overall Game of the Year and programmer David Braben was nominated for the Game Innovation Award. ■

NEW CD32 PACK!

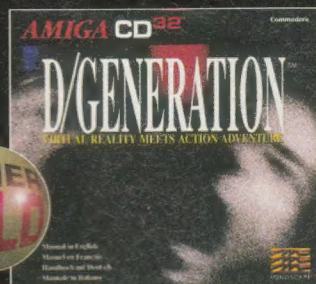
After the universally panned *Dangerous Streets* pack, Commodore have announced a new pack with some slightly more up-to-date games. Launched at the end of March, the pack will include Psygnosis's *Microcosm* (see pages 22-23) and *The Chaos Engine*, a recent hit for the Bitmap Bros which will appear in a specially upgraded AGA version. No doubt *Microcosm* running on the CD32 will draw some impressed crowds in shops, let's just hope the playability doesn't put them off! ■

THANKS TO....
GAME
TORQ SOFTWARE
LANDSDOWNE
COMPUTERS
For all their help with
this issue.

COMPETITION

MINDSCAPE
GIVE US
THE
BIRD!

...But not just the bird. Enter this fantastic competition and you might win not only **Alfred Chicken** (everyone's favourite Chicken), but also **D/Generation**, **Liberation**, **Seek & Destroy**, the **OverKill/Lunar C** double pack plus every new game from Mindscape this year! These super hot titles will include **Evasive Action**, **Megarace**, **Fury Of The Furies** and who knows what else! Only you will, when they pop through your letterbox throughout '94. Get to that quesion.



Last year Alfred Chicken ran for Parliament in a constituency just a few miles from Paragon's office. Was the constituency...

- A) Greater Paxo.
- B) Golden Layton.
- C) Christchurch.

Pop your answer onto a postcard or sealed envelope and post it to:
AMIGA CD32 GAMER
I WANT THAT BIRD COMP
124 OLD CHRISTCHURCH RD.
BOUNEMOUTH,
DORSET BH1 1NF

SURVEY

And whilst that pen's still warm in your hand, how about answering a few polite questions to appease that bothersome advertising manager of ours? Yes, we know you don't want to bother, but advertising managers are like Mortgage Brokers - the more people that are suffering financial ruin, the more slimy ad people seem to breed to profit from others misfortune (neither advertisers or mortgage brokers have parents - they just appear, mysteriously, small babies in sharp suits left outside childless families houses). So cheer our chap up and send in your responses. No doubt, a few randomly picked reply sheets receive gifts...

How old are you? ☐
Are you male ☐ or female ☐?
Are you at school ☐ college ☐ employed ☐ or unemployed ☐
If employed, what do you do?
What, if any, was the computer or console you used before you bought a CD32?
Would you like ☐ or dislike ☐ A500 or A1200 reviews in CD32 Gamer?
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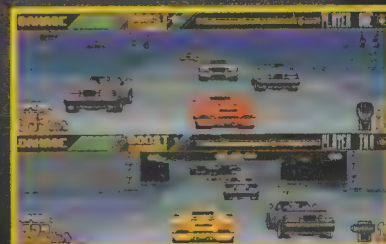
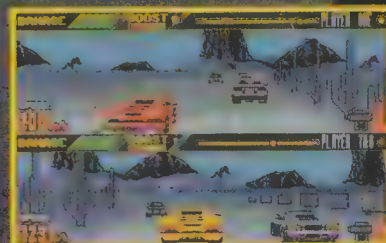
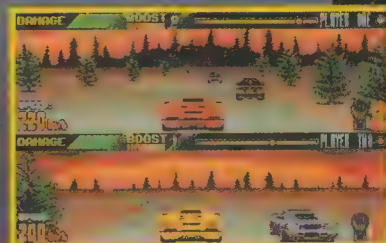
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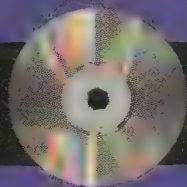


feature



We all know that the CD32 can play some great games, but did you know that it can play movies as well? Jason Holborn gets all square-eyed with Commodore's new FMV module.





feature

Movies on your CD32? Is this Holborn chappie mad? Or is he simply referring to the good old tie-in lark, some software house paying a movie studio obscene amounts of cash to turn a blockbuster flick into a second-rate platformer that sells millions regardless of the fact that it's as exciting as a package holiday to Scunthorpe? (quick pause to catch breathe). No, far from it – after years of speculation and rumour, the boffins have finally worked out how to squeeze a movie onto a compact disc. What's more, your CD32 is at the forefront of this technological leap.

Before you get all excited and try to cram that old VHS tape of *Carry On Camping* into your CD32's drive (a word of advice – the tape won't fit!), it must be stressed that a standard CD32 isn't capable of playing this new breed of 'VideoCD' films. The key to the CD32's role in this up-and-coming market is a £200 add-on recently launched by Commodore.

The FMV module may look like the dictionary definition of a boring little box, but the electronics inside are formidable. To produce those Full Motion Video movies there's a 40 MHz video decompression engine, backed up with a 28MHz Digital Signal Processor (DSP) solely responsible for decoding the audio. It's worth pointing out that although a VideoCD disk does contain a CD quality soundtrack, it's encoded along with the video signal. You cannot, therefore, play the sound track on a standard audio CD player or even a standard (non-FMV equipped) CD32.

Installing the FMV module is straightforward enough – after removing the plastic backing plate from the rear of your CD32, all you have to do is to slide the FMV module into the space beneath the CD32's own electronics until the FMV unit clicks into place. With the module now in place, your CD32 is ready to enter the new age of VideoCD.

SEEDY MOVIES

Playing a VideoCD disk is just as easy as playing an audio disk. All you have to do is to place the VideoCD disk into the CD32's drive and switch on. After a couple of seconds a menu screen appears listing all the MPEG tracks. Most movies have only two tracks – an introduction sequence (the movie company's own trailer) and the film itself.

Surprisingly, although only two tracks are available from this menu screen, most VideoCD films are actually split up into a whole series of tracks, each of which marks the beginning of a major sequence in the film. Although you can't make use of this feature from the menu screen, you can instantly access any available tracks whilst the film is running by pressing the two selection buttons on

the two far corners of the CD32's hand controller. This is one aspect of VideoCD that really leaves the standard VHS video deck for dead. Instead of having to haphazardly wind a video tape forward until you reach the section of the film that you want to watch, VideoCD gives you almost instant access.

The advantages of VideoCD don't just stop here, either. VideoCD films are far superior to the VHS counterparts for a number of very good reasons. For starters, the picture quality of a VideoCD title is miles better than any standard VHS video player I've had the displeasure of using. Even a decent SuperVHS video deck would be pushed to come close to VideoCD and then of course you've got the advantage of a CD quality sound track. The other great advantage of a VideoCD is the quality of its freeze frame – because VideoCD is digital, pausing a film produces a rock-solid image with none of the loss in picture quality you'd expect from a VHS video recorder.



SOUND IN MOTION

If VideoCD sounds like a dream come true, be warned it's not without a few flaws. It's certainly not going to spell the death of both conventional VHS videos and audio CD disks for quite a while yet. For starters, VideoCD is held back by the same limitations as normal audio CDs – you can't write to a VideoCD. Okay, so we've got used to this where audio CDs are concerned, but the big consumer electronics companies are fooling themselves if they think that we're suddenly going to dump our faithful old VHS videos now that VideoCD has arrived. After all, what would we record that episode of *Home & Away* on? Missing just a single episode of this fine example of Australian drama would drive me crazy!

I'm sure that it's only a matter of time before the same boffins that have brought us VideoCD will come up with a recordable version. When such a device does arrive (at an affordable price, of course!), you can kiss goodbye to VHS – until then, however, I very much doubt that most people will ditch their VHS decks quite yet. Most people will probably prefer to use a VideoCD player in conjunction

with a VHS recorder, allowing them to play prerecorded VideoCD films but still going back to VHS if the need arises (having to miss *Home & Away* to go to a party, for example). This is certainly what I've done!

VideoCD's also seem to be rather susceptible to dust and fingerprints, certainly more so than a standard audio CD. I guess it has something to do with the vast amount of information that is packed onto a VideoCD. It's therefore very important that you keep VideoCDs clean – if you permanently scratch a VideoCD disk then you might just as well throw it away as you'll never get it to play properly again!

THE FUTURE OF HOME ENTERTAINMENT?

Although Commodore are helping lead the way with their FMV unit, they certainly didn't invent the VideoCD standard. The electronics required to transform the CD32 into a VideoCD player is based around a chip set called 'MPEG-1' (MPEG is short for Motion Picture Experts Group) which has been accepted as an industry standard by virtually every consumer electronics company in the world. Technics has announced plans to develop VideoCD players, while both 3DO and Philip's CDI are to have add-on modules similar to Commodore's FMV unit. VideoCDs should play equally well on any of these units and this seems likely to ensure a reasonable level of support. Record companies in particular are quite excited about producing VideoCDs featuring their top groups. Techies are also quite excited about the prospect of games using FMV, although to be honest until software houses increase their support for CD32 specific games, the prospect of games developed for FMV module CD32s is remote.

All in all, the FMV is a remarkable piece of technology and should do CD32 sales no end of good – after all it's by far the cheapest way to play VideoCDs. If you've got the cash to spare and are interested in high quality movies then it's a bargain.

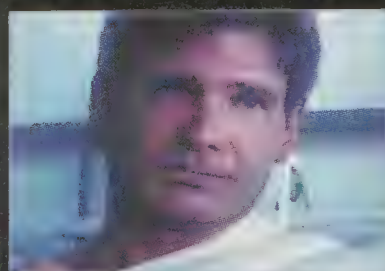


AT THE MOVIES

All this talk of how wonderful VideoCD and the CD-32's own FMV module is all well and good, but the success of VideoCD lies in the availability of VideoCD disks. Although it seems certain that most of the industry will put its money (or should that be products?) where its mouth is, VideoCD is going to have to gain acceptance from the consumer (that's us) if support is to remain in the long term.

The quality of VideoCD titles certainly doesn't seem to be a problem with most of the top movie studios and the music industry jumping onto the VideoCD band wagon wholeheartedly. Already big names such as Paramount, Disney and Columbia have expressed a commitment to VideoCD and it seems only a matter of time before the rest follow suit. If all goes well, we should see even blockbuster movies such as *Jurassic Park* eventually finding their way onto VideoCD - just think, you'll be able to hear the Tyrannosaurus's blood-curdling roar in CD quality!

The price of individual VideoCD titles could fluctuate between the various manufacturers but it seems that the industry may well eventually settle on a ceiling price of £19.95 with £15.95 being the norm. With most VHS movies costing £12.95, that extra £3 is definitely good value for money. ● JH



VIDEOCD FILM GUIDE

So you've got your FMV cartridge but nothing to show it off, other than a free demo disk showing Commodore's dreadful Xmas ad. Jason Holburn provides a run-down on the movies available now.

TOP GUN

Tom Cruise stars along side Kelly McGillis in this rip-roaring adventure that sees Cruise set in the role of Maverick Mitchell, a daring young US Navy fighter pilot out to become the best.

Rating: *****

Naked Gun 2 1/2

Leslie Neilson stars in this sequel to the original Naked Gun that is packed with the same fatal combination of quick-witted one liners and the sort of visual gags that will make your cringe. (I thought this was tops! Priscilla's beaver has never looked better! - Art Ed.)

Rating: ***

The Hunt For Red October

Although the 'Red Menace' was crumbling even as it was made, Sean Connery's charisma and excellent special effects ensured a box office bonanza for this gripping thriller about the defection of the USSR's most advanced nuclear submarine.

Rating: *****

Patriot Games

What starts as a holiday for the Ryan family in England abruptly turns into a struggle for life as Jack Ryan (Harrison Ford) becomes entangled in a lethal terrorist attempt to kill members of the British royal family. With the terrorist plot foiled, Ryan finds that the IRA has a new target - himself and his family.

Rating: *****

Wayne's World

Party on dude! Wayne and Garth may not be everyone's idea of the average American teenagers but they certainly know how to have fun. This film is absolutely dire... NOT! Highly recommended.

Rating: *****

Ghost

Who could possibly resist this tear jerker starring Patrick Swayze and Demi Moore? Get out your hankies, put on the kettle and get ready to sob your way through every minute of this timeless classic. (I think a NOT! is missing here - Ed.)

Rating: *****

Indecent Proposal

Would you pay one million dollars to sleep with Demi Moore? And we do mean sleep, this dreary over long tale serving as a perfect cure for insomnia.

Rating: **

Fatal Attraction

Fancy a bit on the side? After watching this movie you won't! Michael Douglas stars in this psychological thriller that sees him fighting back against the scorn of a jilted lover.

Rating: *****

The Untouchables

Kevin Costner may have made a pretty awful Robin Hood, but he positively shines in this movie set against the backdrop of prohibition and mafia violence in 1930's America. Costner leads a special group of cops nick-named 'The Untouchables' as they attempt to bring about an end to Al Capone's grip on the windy city.

Rating: *****

Raiders of the Lost Ark

The man with the hat is back and this time he hasn't brought his dad! Harrison Ford stars in this VideoCD version of the original Indiana Jones movie which sees Ford up against the might of the Nazi SS as they race to find the Ark of the Covenant.

Rating: *****

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom

Not exactly the best of the Indiana Jones movies, but *Doom* is rip roaring stuff nonetheless. A definite must for all Harrison Ford fans.

Rating: ***

Beverly Hills Cop

The storyline may be rather weak, but Eddy Murphy is as sharp as ever in this cops and robbers epic set in the glamour of Beverly Hills. As always, Murphy makes this film with his usual mixture of quick-witted one liners.

Rating: *** (***** - Art Ed & Ed.)

Star Trek The Motion Picture

This long, serious-minded adventure features state-of-the-art special effects by Douglas Trumbull (of *Blade Runner* fame) and really puts VideoCD technology to the test.

Rating: *****

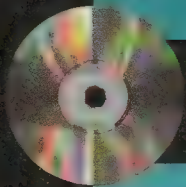
Star Trek 6: The Undiscovered Country

Bauhik hauck dauh. (that's Klingon, you know!) With the Klingon race on the verge of extinction, Kirk and his crew attempt to bring peace throughout the galaxy. When both he and Bones are framed for a murder they did not commit, Spock steps in to save the day. ('Discovering' this movie was Kirk's biggest mistake since fusing Andrea's circuits - Ed.)

Rating: *****

VIDEOCD STOCKISTS

All of these titles are available from Gordon Harwood Computers, New Street, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 7BP. Telephone 0773 636781.



interview



Although Commodore's UK offices are surprisingly modest, there's no doubting the importance of good old blighty to the firm. CD32 was launched here first, and year on year Amiga computers keep selling. When the last Managing Director left, the company's top salesman wasn't given a choice about stepping into his shoes. Stuart Wynne asked David Pleasance whether he can sell another 2.5 million Commodores.

CD32 CHAT

A keyboard/disk drive adaptor turning the CD32 into a fully fledged computer?

"Bringing out an add-on device for CD32 requires a special chip which can only come from Commodore. If there is to be a peripheral device, and that is yet to be decided, that peripheral device will almost certainly come from Commodore. My guess is that we will know [about demand] in a couple of months maximum... If there isn't a big enough demand then we'll probably let someone else do it."

Plans to redesign the case?

"What you're saying to us is that you'd like us to! Design is like music, it's very subjective... of course we could've designed something better, but going back to reality, from the conception of the product to actually delivering it was eight months and that is an unbelievable time scale... at least we've got it out, it's not vapourware like so many products are. But styling is important and we constantly look at that."

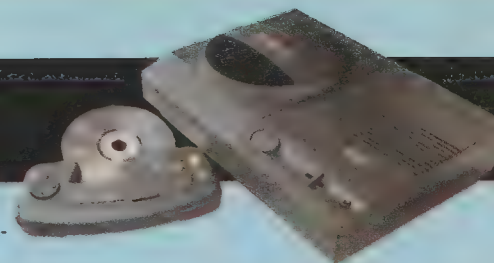
Predicted sales for '94?

"I would assume on a European basis that between now and Xmas we could easily do 350,000 maybe even 400,000. But of course a lot depends on the ability of the software publishers bringing titles out. If they stick with their commitments, that would be beneficial. If they don't, that could affect those numbers. My belief is that if CD32 takes off the way I think it will go, CD32 will be the C64 of the Nineties and the numbers will be really large."

SOFTWARE SUPPORT

Is software support picking up?

"Absolutely, I think that it's an endorsement of Commodore's policy over many years to get close to software publishers. I think there was a time when I was abroad when we kind of lost our way a little bit, but almost without exception we have a better relationship now than ever before. The best way to endorse that is to tell you that we have now been offered for bundling in our next



Xmas pack, and beyond, the best titles ever to come out."

There were rumours about a tie-up with LucasArts?

"That's unlikely to happen, I think. But when we were at CES earlier this year, the astonishing thing was how many companies that haven't actually been associated with before, really were crying out to talk to us. Without going into names, there are some companies whose products were traditionally only available in arcades because the specs of the [domestic] machines weren't good enough. A number of those companies are committing to CD32 because it allows them to do a good representation of their arcade titles."

Can you name them?

"Use your imagination, the major ones I can assure you."

Japanese companies?

"Yeah. Why wouldn't they do it? These titles already exist but there's just been no platform which has been technically capable of portraying those products in a meaningful way. Now there is."

When will they appear?

"Xmas."

Do you wish you'd bought *Psygnosis*?

"No, no. I mean I know Ian Hetherington and Jonathan Ellis, they're great guys, but the price paid was far too high."

It's a shame *Microcosm* didn't hit Xmas.

"Well, I think the reason it didn't hit Xmas was because with the CD32 they're putting more and more gameplay into it. They've deliberately been working on that all the way through. After all, it originally started as a Amiga CDTV product!"

Will the sequel, *Scavenger IV*, appear on CD32?

"Psygnosis maintain that they are committed to CD32. FM Towns at the end of the day is a PC and anything they produce on PC is logical to put on PC. So yeah, I think so. There's a number of products that we'd like to see on CD32. I'd like to see *Alone In the Dark 2* on CD32. That's a great product, whether that company will do it or not, who knows. It's quite easy from CD, so maybe..."

Will there be FMV module-based games?

"Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. No question about it at all. The big advantage of CD product is that it's extremely unlikely that there'll be piracy, therefore sales will justify the investment necessary for that calibre of product. On that basis I am very confident. And in fact we're always having developers call in with these great ideas for what they want to do. I think it's only matter of time and my guess is that it will probably be in twelve months time, or maybe a bit longer, and we'll see some absolutely stunning stuff. We really will."

THE MAN HIMSELF

What have been your best and worst times at Commodore? You've been here for ten years now, haven't you?

"You get a Victoria Cross for less!"

"I think the worst time was a previous life. Probably in the 1985-86 period when the whole of Europe stopped buying home computers, full stop, and there was this void in the market for almost two years. Fortunately it got bumpstarted again and a whole new generation of kids came though and, of course, the Amiga helped."

"In terms of the best times. There's no doubt in my mind that the best times are really now with the CD32, which is a product which absolutely delivers its promise. And the A1200 which is a really very good value for money product. I think that's got to be Commodore's highs at the moment, they're not vapourware, they exist. It's a sales person's dream to have these products in the stable."

Did you expect to become Managing Director when Kelly Sumner left?

"I turned down the position before Kelly was offered it! I'd just moved from Switzerland to the States as vice-president and I didn't then want to come back to the UK because, well, I don't know if you know this but in life there are two types of sales people: hunters and farmers, and I'm a hunter. I saw my role in America very much as a hunting role and so I chose to turn it down. I have to say when Kelly left I wasn't given any option, but to be candid, this has now come back into a hunting role anyway, so I'm extremely happy. It's worked out well."

MOVIE MANIA

How important is Video CD?

"I think VideoCD is going to be a much more significant market than what computer games is today. I have no doubts about it at all. Digital Video, as they're now calling it, is going to be a very dominant format for at least three years, maybe four or five, but at least three."

What percentage of CD32 owners will buy FMV?

"If the record companies deliver what they've said they're going to deliver, then the uptake will be very high. If we get the right artists on video then I think it will go like a train, I really do."

When will movies start automatically appearing on VideoCD?

"I think it will happen very quickly because the cost of production is so low."

Will there be a CD32 upgrade for the A1200?

"Our problem with that very simply that the circuitboard on the CD32 is a completely different design from the A1200's. It includes a gate array with over 10,000 transistors, and that gate array was designed specifically to support CD and, more importantly, FMV. At the moment, it's just not possible to produce a CD device for the A1200 which will support FMV."

"I believe that it makes a lot more sense to have an interface for the CD32 to work with the A1200. I heard today there's been a development in that from a third party. If there has been a

breakthrough, then that will be tremendous news for everybody."

"A1200 owners and pros who want real computing power are inundating us with enquires. If they get the CD32 it's a fairly inexpensive device to connect the two together. That's the best they're going to get I can assure you."

THE COMPETITION...

3DO?

"The product, frankly, is overpriced and extremely hard to write for. And certainly if their lack of success in the States is anything to go by then I don't we've got anything to worry about."

And the Jaguar?

"Jaguar technology is a double-edged sword. First of all, in some ways it's not what it promises, it's not a true 64-bit product. Also, they've got a cart-based system when most publishers are desperately trying to get out of cartridges. But I loved the challenge when we took them on over the ST and I've got withdrawal symptoms from not having that battle again. So I'd like them to come onboard!"

Sega Saturn?

"Our understanding is that it's been delayed until mid-1995. And I think they're right to drop back and relook at the market. They've now seen the spec of Sony's product, they've seen what promises to come out from Project Reality, they know what our spec is at the moment (they don't know what we might do, but they know what our spec is at the moment), 3DO's spec. They've got to say to themselves, and I'm sure that they have, that Saturn's original spec was not up to scratch. So unless they're prepared to go one step further, I think they'd be wasting their time. So I think they're wise, that's what Nintendo

did, they dropped back because their original spec [SNES-based] was awful. It really was."

Sony PS-X?

"I'll believe it when I see it. What we hear is that they're having real problems getting their hardware down to size and cost."

Nintendo's Project Reality?

"I think that's an absolute farce. What we saw at CES was a \$50,000 Indigo workstation with 32 custom chips in it, showing some quite nice but not absolutely stunning graphics. If anybody thinks that you can transform a \$50,000 workstation into a \$200 machine, that's loaves and fishes. So I think that's a scam. More than anything else it's spoiling tactics, companies are saying don't buy what's out there today because in eighteen months time you're going to have this. That's a nonsense. Nobody can deliver for \$200 what they say they're going to deliver. Nobody can. Let's be realistic about it. I think with Nintendo's muscle they will bring out a credible product at a credible price... but we believe we can keep pace technologically with anything that we know of that's coming down line. We are absolutely confident that we can do that."

THE FUTURE

Will the CD32 price drop when Jaguar appears?

"No. Not at all. We don't believe for a second all this nonsense about a \$100 dual-speed CD drive. You know we designed the CD32, we are in touch with all the latest technology and we know it's not possible to produce something for \$100. By the time that product comes to the UK, by the time you add a CD device to it, it will not be competitive to us. And frankly what you're getting with a CD32 for £299 is a hell of a lot for your money. It really is."

CD32 with built-in FMV?

"I'm sure R&D have already made designs for it. But there'll probably be very little cost saving, except for the casing which is pennies. So I think we'd still keep an entry level machine without FMV, allowing people who can't afford to make that full investment to still buy it, then save up for the add-on later."

What about a faster CPU for the CD32 in '94?

"Well, that's always option but it depends on the price of chips. As to whether we have plans or not, considering CD32 is only four and half months old I think it's premature to talk about superceding it, just yet!"

There's been rumours of Nintendo buying out Commodore?

"Yeah, and then there's all these rumours that Nintendo had paid \$30 million to sell Atari Jaguars. But no, Nintendo buying Commodore, that's never been on the cards!"

What will the new Amiga workstation be like?

"It's likely that we will use a 64-bit RISC core coupled with the AAA chipset. We expect it will give us 100% Amiga compatibility as well as compatibility with PC software through Windows NT. The system will include a 3D rendering engine with texture mapping and all of that in the heart of the chip which, coupled with the AAA chipset, will give us the most powerful workstation about, certainly in terms of value for money. Obviously our intention will be to migrate that technology down to cost-effective units like the A1200, or its equivalent, and the CD32 in the months following."

CD32 II this year?

"It's my belief that the AAA chipset won't see this side of Xmas in a finished form. So in terms of seeing that in a CD32 product, certainly not this year."

Xmas 1995? With CD32 compatibility?

"I'm reasonably confident that there will be a high level of compatibility. But we are talking about quite some time away! Still, our R&D is not sitting on their backsides, they're going forward. We've got some of the best engineers in the business, there's no doubt about that."

● SSW



review

While most console companies are happy to churn out safe, unimaginative clones of *Mario* and *SFII*, Interplay grabbed a container load of magazine awards last year with a string of slick, innovative games which managed to be fresh, funny and extremely playable. The best of the lot was undoubtedly *The Lost Vikings*, which was swiftly converted to A500 and now CD32.

The basic idea of the game owes much to *Lemmings*, with each of the 37 levels requiring you to make use of the varying skills of your three characters. You might typically send Erik The Swift out to run about, leaping gaps to explore a level. Once you've got it sussed you'd bring Olaf The Stout with his heavy shield, behind which Balerog the Fierce could launch an attack with his arrows. But unlike *Lemming*, these guys don't go mindlessly wandering about. It's up to you to grab control and move them about. It's an arcade puzzler which plays and looks like a top-class platformer.

While most puzzle games fall down on their disappointing looks or their lack of any fun apart from brain-aching puzzles, *Lost Vikings* dresses its puzzles up in arcade-style graphics and will appeal to just about everyone. Then, once you're hooked, the complexity of the puzzles increases to keep you playing late, late into the night. Again, unlike your average puzzler, *Lost Vikings* makes sure new puzzles involve new fun factors like pumps which inflate the Vikings into helium balloons able to float about levels, or a crane with a magnet which picks up Olaf by his shield.

The most fun comes from the Vikings themselves, of course, as they just have so much personality. The way their different abilities can be combined is great, for example using Olaf's shield for Erik to jump off, and the individuality is emphasised by the brilliant animation, like the way Olaf's tum bulges out of his trousers and the sarcastic comments they make about each other periodically.

The Lost Vikings is without doubt a classic, which makes it (relatively) easy to forgive the fact this is a straight port of the A500 game entirely lacking CD32 upgrading. If you fancy a game to test both reactions and brain, plus giving your sense of humour a good working out, this is the one for you. ● SSW



Olaf

Erik

Balerog

ERIK THE SWIFT

Age: 19

Favourite Movies: The Running Man, Logan's Run, Nuns on the Run.

Primary Ability: Jumping.

Secondary Ability: Ramming walls with his head.

Weakness: He has no defences whatsoever and his speed can occasionally get him into trouble faster than you can get him out of it!

BALEOG THE FIERCE

Age: 25

Favourite Movies: Rambo II, Conan The Barbarian, Terminator.

Primary Ability: He can slice up enemies with his sword.
Secondary Ability: He can fire arrows, including special fire ones, to kill enemies at long distance and also activate switches.

Weaknesses: Such a mad-head he has no defensive ability at all.

OLAF THE STOUT

Age: 23

Favourite Movies:

The Breakfast Club, The Naked Lunch, My Dinner with Andre.

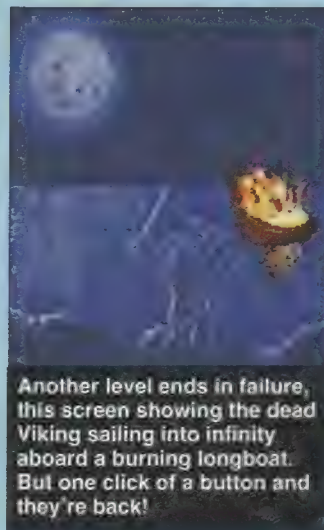
Primary Ability: He can block enemy attacks with his shield.

Secondary Ability: By holding his shield over his head he can glide down off high platforms.

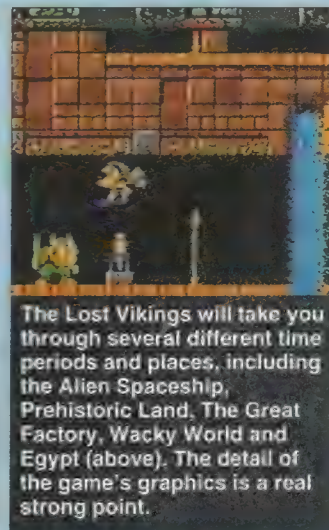
Weaknesses: Has to wait for Balerog to attack for him and shield ineffective against certain enemies.



The game opens with our three Viking heroes going on a short hunting trip before being abducted by evil aliens.



Another level ends in failure, this screen showing the dead Viking sailing into infinity aboard a burning longboat. But one click of a button and they're back!



The *Lost Vikings* will take you through several different time periods and places, including the Alien Spaceship, Prehistoric Land, The Great Factory, Wacky World and Egypt (above). The detail of the game's graphics is a real strong point.

THE LOST VIKINGS



Balerog runs afoul of a forcefield.

LEVEL 2 is set aboard the alien spaceship as the Vikings seek to escape.

1. Use Olaf to explore unknown areas as his shield will protect him. Then get Balerog here, killing both aliens. Now get Erik here to collect two bombs, after which all three should take the lift on the right.



● PUBLISHER: Interplay ● PRICE: £29.99
● DEVELOPER: Silicon & Synapse ● OUT: Now



8. Use Erik to headbutt wall to get sleek. Then move Olaf down to ladder to block yet another laser pod. Balerog can kill aliens.

Olaf uses his shield to good effect against this rampaging caveman in Prehistoria.



9. Get all three Vikings to the exit and it's level complete!

As Olaf holds his shield over his head, Balerog prepare to activate the magnetic crane.



5. Move Erik toward the computer, drop a bomb and move away. Return to the lift and go up the next floor.

4. More Balerog forward and shoot button.

3. Push into the wall here to find secret room.

6. Shoot button to activate arrow lift.

7. Kill alien with Balerog, then use Olaf to block laser pod. Move others half way down ladder, then bring Olaf down to block second laser pod.

Profile

1 Player
1 Skill Level
✓ Save Game
Password
x CD32 Enhanced
A500 version.

PROS: Three hilarious characters, 37 levels packed with inventive and innovative puzzles.

CONS: It's a shame the graphics weren't upgraded to AGA standard, and it's annoying when you're about to complete a level and a single Viking dies, forcing you to start from scratch.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

910



ALFRED CHICKEN

● PUBLISHER: Mindscape ● PRICE: £25.99
● DEVELOPER: Twilight ● OUT: Now

Although static screenshots almost suggest an 8bit game with all those tiny sprites, in action Alfred is impressively presented. Leaving aside the question of why anyone would want one, it has to be said this is the best animated chicken ever. When he divebombs, for example, the sprite smoothly revolves then transforms into a swept-wing jet, before landing with a quivering beak. Enemy sprites are similarly detailed, even simple guns have eyes and frowning expressions. If you like supremely silly, exceptionally cute platformers then you're in for a treat.

Beneath the good looks, the game also plays well with huge and varied levels providing plenty of challenge. In fact, challenge is the one problem. Levels are big and reset points can be far apart. If chickens aren't your thing, this and a basic lack of originality might put you off. Otherwise, Alfred is cautiously recommended as among the best of the CD32 platformers. ●SSW



- 1 Player
- 7 Skill Levels (variable lives)
- X Save Game
- ✓ CD32 Enhanced

Originally an A500, this has been upgraded with 256 colours, parallax scrolling and enhanced sound. Disk accessing is sensibly arranged.

PROS: A superbly animated chicken lost in a supremely cute and varied world of platforms. Challenging and fun.

CONS: Unoriginal and the dive attack is difficult.

GRAPHICS



SOUND



GAMEPLAY



710

ZOO L

● PUBLISHER: Gremlin Graphics ● PRICE: £29.99
● DEVELOPER: In-house ● OUT: Now

The Amiga has spawned more imaginative games than a legion of consoles, but never a classic platformer like *Mario* or *Sonic*. *Zool*, despite the hype is no exception. Enhanced for the A1200 chipset, *Zool* may look even brighter and more cheerful than any Mega Drive game ever could, but playability is painfully weak. Clever puzzles, sophisticated level maps and imaginative power-ups are conspicuous by their absence. *Zool* admittedly has plenty of moves – a sliding attack, spin attack and even a gun – but this matters little when so much of the gameplay is simply a painstaking search for the exit.

Ironically, the A1200 upgrade doesn't help either with all the bright colours making it often difficult to spot what's happening. The CD soundtrack is good though, and despite its flaws *Zool* certainly offers a big challenge with Sweet, Music, Fruit, Tool, Toy, Funfair and Desert Island worlds to conquer – each with four levels and end-level guardians. **SSW**



- 1 Player
- 3 Skill Levels
- ✓ Save Game
- 3 continues
- ✓ CD32 Enhanced

The original A500 game has been upgraded with 256 colours, 12 good CD soundtracks and an excellent Silicon Graphics intro.

PROS: Big, bright, cheerful graphics and a good soundtrack. Plenty of challenge and variety.

CONS Gameplay lacks variety in a big way and the graphics can get confusing.

GRAPHICS



SOUND



GAMEPLAY



640



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review

Originally developed for CDTV, *Microcosm* soon outgrew that dated hardware. Designed to push the envelope of CD-ROM entertainment with FMV backdrops, fast-cut rendered sequences and a Rick Wakeman soundtrack, *Microcosm* is a stunning demonstration of what CD32 is capable of.

Undoubtedly one of the best parts of *Microcosm* is its stunning intro, combining filmed footage of real people with Silicon Graphics rendered cityscapes and vehicles. The quality is such that you wonder if someone hasn't sneaked an FMV cart into your CD32!

The actual game is split into five levels, each set in a different part of the body, from the carotid artery to the femur bone. You can attempt these levels in whatever order you like, except that the final level (set in the brain) is only accessible when the others have been completed. At the end of each level there's your regulation mega-guardian – truly spectacular Silicon Graphics creations.

In-game graphics are almost as impressive as the intro. The FMV-style animated backdrops move smoothly and quickly. You may not be able to interact with them, but they really can induce a real feeling of vertigo as they twist and turn. Overlaid on top of this are a fantastic variety of bizarre enemy sprites; everything from mushrooms to flowers to rocks. These move very fast and can often fill the screen, with no discernible slow-down. There is a little graininess about the imagery, but overall it's great except for the bullets (white block sprites) and your various vehicles (tiny and poorly animated).

As if all this wasn't enough, you also get some fast-cut, exterior views of your ship every so often, to break up the action, and a top-notch soundtrack. *Microcosm* looks, and sounds, like a dream come true. It's only when you begin to play that the dream turns into a teeth-grinding nightmare.

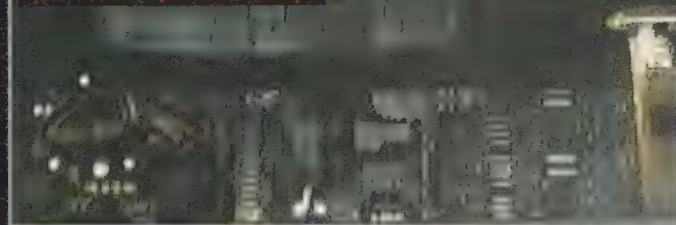
Technologically, the smart thing about *Microcosm* is that into-the-screen perspective which allows the most dynamic and involving use of FMV. You really do feel you're on rollercoaster at times. But this perspective makes huge demands on the sprite graphics. A horizontally-scrolling blaster may not cause jaws to drop, but the speed, size and relative distances of objects are all immediately apparent. In *Microcosm*, this is far from the case. It takes time to work out how to interpret the 3D graphics. When you do get the hang of it you start to survive longer, but this only reveals how little variety there is to gameplay. You zip about the screen with your craft, its movement more like a jerky cursor than a sub, your thumb permanently jammed on the firebutton, while your head is trying to figure out the maze you're lost in. Psygnosis's 'added gameplay' seems mainly to consist of ramping up the difficulty level, which succeeds only in making a dull shoot-'em-up an exceptionally annoying one.

From the moment CD32 GAMER started, this was the game we were waiting for to show just what CD32 can do. This it does, but I had hoped it would be rather more enjoyable to play... **SSW**

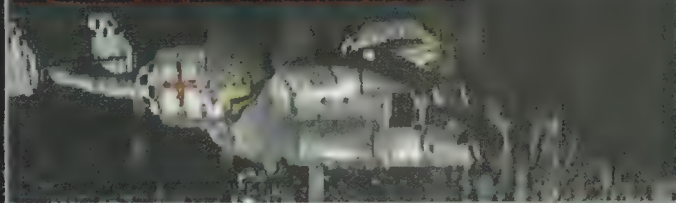


Set inside the body of Cybertech's CEO, Trion Korsby, *Microcosm* (Greek for small world) pits his company's miniaturised technology against Axion's intruders. The SF scenario of warring mega-corporations became a little ironic last year, when Psygnosis itself was swallowed by mighty Sony.

On the distant planet of Bodor...



And company bosses travel like Presidents...



With heavy, heavy security...

MICROCOSM

Touchdown...

● PUBLISHER: Psygnosis ● PRICE: £34.99
● DEVELOPER: In-house ● OUT: Now

But Axiom have an inside agent...

And armed support...

The RS-18 Hunter Killer submersible races through Korsby's strangely-bloodless femur bone. The blue forcefield provides invaluable protection at the start of the mission.

Cybertech security investigates...

Too late, the implant is already injected...

The box artwork is a higher resolution version of in-game Silicon Graphics generated visuals. The power of the SGI hardware, and the artistry of Psygnosis's designers, is dazzlingly obvious. Here an end-level guardian prepares to munch an RS-18 sub.

The S2-21 Pressure Suit is used for missions inside the brain because of the confined spaces. However, all three types of vehicle handle much the same.

Profile

1 Player

1 Skill Level

✓ Save Game

✓ CD32 Enhanced

This pushes CD32 technology to new limits and would be impossible to do on a conventional Amiga.

PROS: State-of-the-art CD-ROM technology delivers a stunning intro, plus superb FMV-style animated backdrops for actual gameplay and excellent fast-cut rendered sequences. In-game music and FX are good.

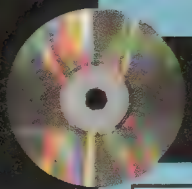
CONS: Plays like a dog.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

610



reviews

MEAN ARENAS

● PUBLISHER: Ice ● PRICE: £29.99
 ● DEVELOPER: In-house ● OUT: Now

So you've unpacked your CD32, and peeked through the smoked glass lid to get a glimpse of the innards of your state-of-the-art CD driven console. What a beauty, you think, as you whiz up to the games shop to purchase a stunning new title. Can you see any interactive movies? No? Well, how about your average ground-breaking, CD-busting mega-game that only *your* console could produce? Stuff that. What you really want to play is *Pac-Man*, and Ice have predicted your urgent need and provided *Mean Arenas*.

There's scrolling arenas (mazes), coins to collect (yellow dots), power-ups, baddies and loads more too. Pressure pads that activate missiles, keys for doors, teleporters, mines, conveyor belts and, well, the list is endless. But however well presented this game is, it is no more than a fast, reasonably adequate conversion of everyone's favourite dot munching game. The arenas are largish, the multitude of baddies well animated and varied, and there's plenty of gunfire and nuclear explosions to distract you from the blistering unoriginality of this game, but, *Pacman* it is, and if that's your thing, you'll love this. It's certainly pretty fast action. To those of you are waiting for that wonder game to astonish your friends with, go back home and look inside your CD32 for a while longer. It ain't here yet. ● MCW



12 Players
 1 Skill Level
 ✓ Save Game
 (long) Password system
 ✓ CD32 Enhanced
 Quicker level access, better sound samples.

PROS: If *Pacman*'s your thing, this is the best way to play it, with loads of action, superb sampled speech and a lot of trimmings. It's a big challenge.
CONS: It's nothing new though and yet again, the CD32's potential has been thrown away...

GRAPHICS



SOUND



GAMEPLAY

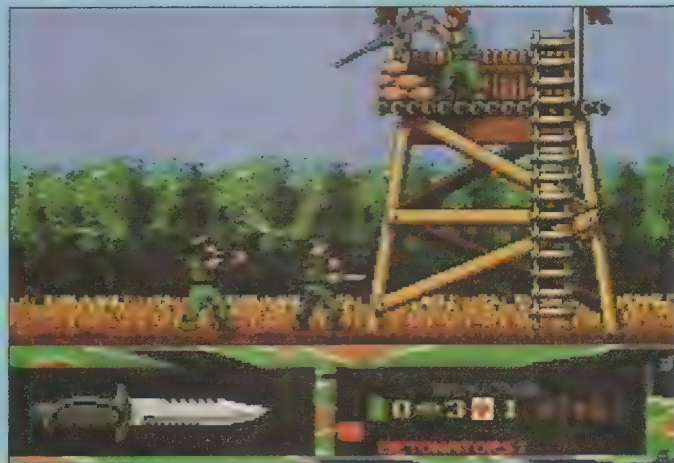
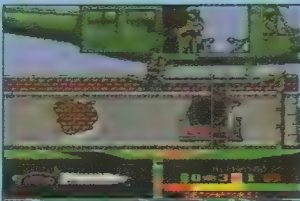


610

FIRE FORCE

● PUBLISHER: Ice ● PRICE: £29.99
 ● DEVELOPER: In-house ● OUT: Now

This *Green Beret* variant had good reviews on the A1200, but the simplistic gameplay and extraordinarily dated graphics look depressingly inadequate on the CD32. To disguise *Fire Force*'s woeful unoriginality, the producers have slapped on some waffle about different missions and a large armoury of weapons to choose from, but this strategic element just doesn't wash. As soon as you see your sad sprite fall from the helicopter, you'll wish you still had your C64 or Spectrum, because both computers had plenty of games both more playable and better stylised than this nightmare. Aside from the pathetic animation and sluggish play, the criminal CD32 pad makes control nigh on impossible. You soon find yourself accidentally entering tents and huts, as the cursor pad wobbles uncertainly across its axis. This kind of fast(ish) action blaster depends entirely upon good control, so that you can instinctively move, shoot or throw a grenade without having to think. Here, it's like Russian roulette what movement you'll perform, and even if you can forgive the programmers their dire graphics, you're unlikely to play long enough to see past level 2. A shocker. ● MCW



1 Player
 1 Skill Level
 ✗ Save Game
 ✓ CD32 Enhanced
 More colour.

PROS: If you're desperate for some side scrolling action in a soldier suit, this may appeal to you.
CONS: This doesn't deserve to be re-released, especially when no effort has been made to sort out the tortoise loving pace and crude, chunky graphics. The disk accessing pauses are... terribly... long.

GRAPHICS



SOUND



GAMEPLAY



310

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review



This stylish, compulsive arcade adventure has already proved itself to be a big hit on the A500, so it was only natural that it should be one of the premier releases on the CD-32.

Robert Cook's *D/Generation* is a classic, sci-fi isometric adventure which is more than welcome in its subtly enhanced CD32 version. It opens with you dropped (literally) straight into the action, landing with your hellpack on the 80th floor of a laboratory that's been experimenting with Neogen organisms — indestructible, artificially intelligent creations — the latest being the D/Generation. You're here to deliver a package to their designer, Derrida, but you find the building almost deserted, except for a few cowering survivors and a wealth of D/Generation prototypes that kill anyone in sight. Undaunted, you resolve to find your way through ten hazard strewn floors and find Derrida.

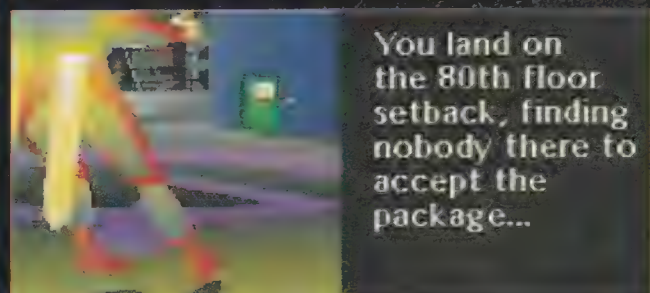
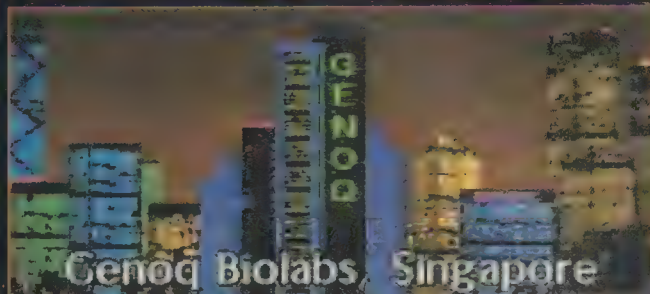
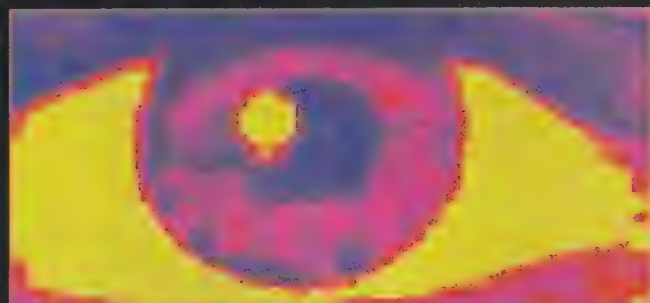
D/Generation is enormous fun to play right from the start. The atmosphere is excellent as you wander around the offices, bumping into killer robots, lethal security systems and frightened employees who offer information and guidance. To begin with, all you have is the package you arrived with, but special weapons are scattered around, along with passcards and computers which can be accessed for clues or seemingly random pieces of information.

If you find a human survivor, he (or she) may offer you explosives in return for freedom, so they must be guided out of immediate danger like lambs, steered skilfully through the building's lethal defence systems. Each floor has thirty or so rooms, and whilst a certain amount of backtracking is necessary when learning the layout, most puzzles can be solved with items close at hand.

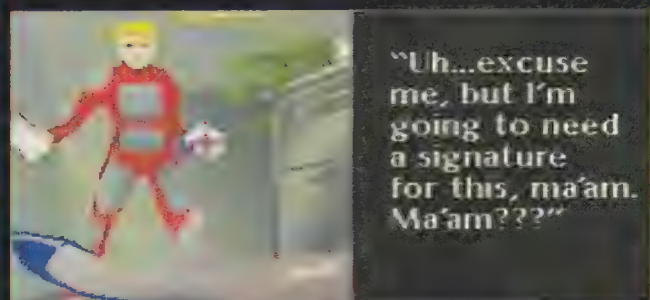
When you get to the end of a floor, a tube whisks you up to the next level and your position is saved to the CD32's 1K of static memory. This eliminates the need to keep traversing the earlier floors when you come back to play, although solving an entire floor in one sitting is still pretty tough. Lastability is further enhanced by the way the game also saves how many lives you have. It's wise to do each floor a few times to get through with the most lives. Rescuing hostages also rewards you with an extra life, so charity is highly profitable.

In style and atmosphere, *D/Generation* is very similar to the SNES cyberpunk classic, *Shadowrun*, but is more suitable for novice adventurers since the format is a bit more straightforward, albeit no less challenging. Most rooms are packed with electrified plates, tracking guns, plasma barriers and teleporters. The chief problem tends to be deactivating these devices and shooting control panels that open and close doors. A superb touch is the way your laser will bounce off walls at an angle, allowing some tricky closed doors to be opened with a bit of practice. Excellent game design. Solving a room, and in turn levels, is tremendously rewarding, and since all the problems are essentially solved with obvious logic, no point of massive frustration is reached.

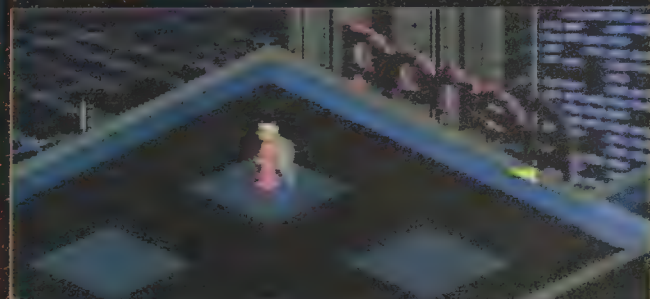
Atmosphere is skilfully created through the tense conversations with people, the sinister, blinking monitors that can be tapped into, and the haunting, technophobic ambience that hangs over this predominately silent game. It's completely absorbing and the most addictive and enjoyable game I've played for absolutely ages. Like so many of the current CD32 releases, it doesn't begin to explore the machine's potential, but this is still an excellent, original game that deserves a whole new fanbase in this faultless adaptation. An absolute must buy, and my favourite CD32 game bar none. ● MCW



You land on the 80th floor setback, finding nobody there to accept the package...



"Uh...excuse me, but I'm going to need a signature for this, ma'am. Ma'am???"



The stylish stills that introduce you to your adventure really set the scene for this stylish, noir thriller. The many ironic, corporate adverts that blink on the consoles you tap into add a black humour to the game.

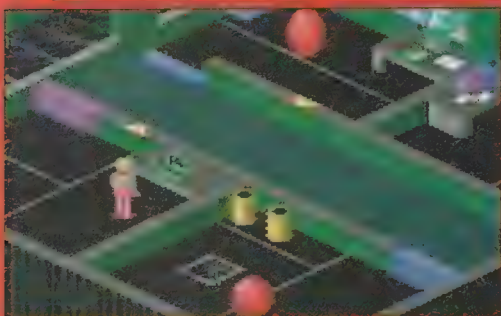
Genoq

Were into your games

D/GENERATION



Sucked up to the next floor, after a relatively easy time of it on floor 82. Watch out for prisoners from here after, as some of them turn nasty, not being what they seem to be at all...



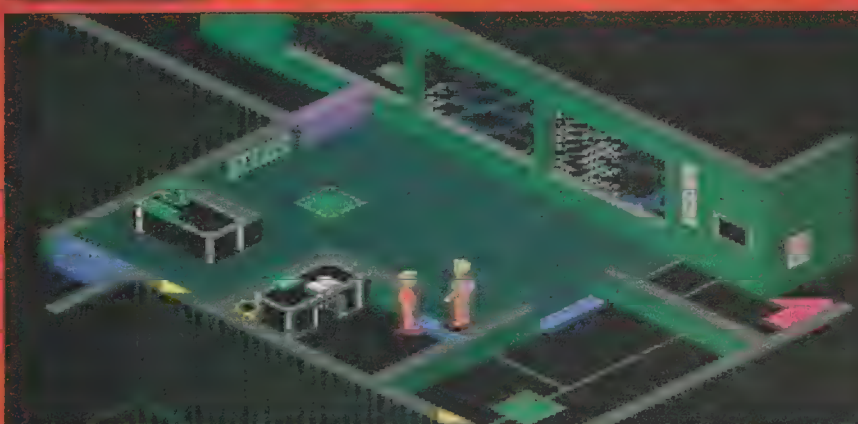
One of the first rooms has a laser gun to arm yourself with (top left), plus one of the first security pass keys (flashing in the bottom right corner). Remember to guide the hostage out of the room to earn an extra life.



All of the mutants in this room must be destroyed and the vents closed before the hostage will speak to you. The pink energy bar blocking your entrance to the prisoner will defuse if you lure a mutant into it.

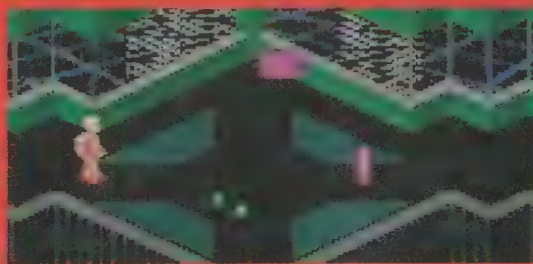
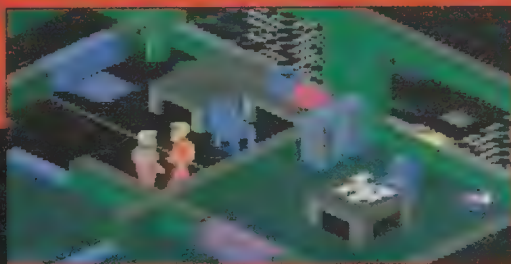
D/GENERATION

● PUBLISHER: Mindscape ● PRICE: £25.99
● DEVELOPER: In-house ● OUT: Now



Hey, look I found this thing. It's got warning labels on it, some kind of explosive. You can take it if you just get me out of here, all right?

Several of the hostages in the building have equipment and weapons to bribe you with. The explosive offered by this chap will blow up the pink barrier which could only be opened otherwise by entering the correct password at the console. Clues tend to be rather cryptic. Be warned! Death is popular.



Profile

- 1 Player
- 1 Skill Level
- ✓ Save Game

CD32 RAM allows you to save one floor position.

✓ CD32 Enhanced Graphics and sound are improved, plus joypad can be re-configured.

PROS: Atmospheric, superb design (if not pushing the machines capabilities) and hugely entertaining.

CONS: Sound is minimal, and it takes a while to get used to controlling your man and aiming fire.

GRAPHICS



SOUND



GAMEPLAY



910

SEEK & DESTROY

● PUBLISHER: Mindscape ● PRICE: £25.99
● DEVELOPER: Vision Software ● OUT: Now

Ho hum, Mindscape's predilection for reviving ancient games now has them revisiting *Raid On Bungling Bay*. At first glance the graphics certainly look C64ish, but closer attention reveals some nice detail, while screen rotation is slick and fast. There are fourteen levels in all, ranging over desert, sea, snow and jungle with a variety of targets including infantry, tanks and gunship copters. Also welcome are a variety of weapons, from guns to missiles to air strikes. The joypad is well used with the top buttons cycling through weapon types, each one announced with sampled speech. In fact, there's quite a few samples providing some excellent atmosphere – the 'game over' one is probably the best. This all makes the game fairly addictive, especially with the promise of those later landscapes, and at a budget price of £15 could certainly be recommended. As it is, the simplistic graphics and lack of gameplay variety make this a somewhat more questionable full-price purchase. ● SSW



12 Players
2 Skill Levels
X Save Game
✓ CD32 Enhanced
Excellent samples and good use of the joypad, but access times are annoyingly lengthy.
PROS: Fast, simplistic shoot-'em-up, which is initially quite addictive.
CONS: But graphics on the whole are disappointing and the gameplay lacks any real depth. This certainly isn't the sort of game you'd expect from the CD32.

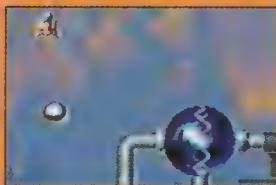
GRAPHICS
SOUND
GAMEPLAY

610

FLY HARDER

● PUBLISHER: Buzz ● PRICE: £14.99
● DEVELOPER: Starbyte Software ● OUT: Now

The back to the future theme of CD32 shoot-'em-ups continues with a game which owes more than a little to ancient C64 classic *Thrust*. The basic idea is you control a tiny ship with no room for autopilots or terrain following radar. To keep from crashing into the ground you must constantly push on the joypad to activate your engine. Moving around requires rotating your ship, using the engine to push you in the way you want to, which brings us to inertia – the faster you go, the longer it takes to slow down. *Fly Harder* is, in short, a crash course in the laws of physics with the emphasis on the 'crash'!



Your objective on each level is to find one or more mines, which loosely gravitate toward your ship, then take them to the reactor you're tasked to destroy. Add in enemy ships, guns, forcefields, homing missiles and you're beginning to glimpse the difficulty of your mission.

The original *Thrust* was a classic, brilliantly original and playable. *Fly Harder* looks prettier, but with just eight levels starts tough and soon gets murderously difficult. If you fancy a challenge take a look, but why couldn't the programmers provide more levels? ● SSW



1 Player
3 Skill Levels
✓ Save Game
Password
X CD32 Enhanced
PROS: The levels are graphically varied and the *Thrust* inspired gameplay makes a nice change from your usual horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-ups.
CONS: But a mere eight levels gives little room for a well-judged learning curve. This is for rock hard arcade fans only. Wimps need not apply!

GRAPHICS
SOUND
GAMEPLAY

510

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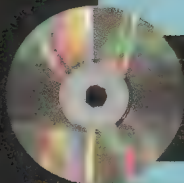
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review

DOUBLE PACK
DOUBLE BACK



Originally an A1200 release, *Overkill* makes its CD debut joined by *Lunar-C*. An apt coupling since both draw heavy inspiration from ancient coin-ops.

Overkill has a pleasingly modest scenario: rather than saving the entire galaxy single-handedly, your efforts are merely a holding action until larger forces arrive. Such modesty is appropriate as *Overkill* itself is, at best, a holding action before some truly CD32 designed shoot-'em-ups arrive. The graphics are fine with some excellent parallax scrolling and furious explosions, but the size and detail of the sprites wouldn't be out of place on an A500. Sound is similarly limited aside from sampled cries of help from your Support Troops.

Support Troops? Yep, those are the tiny little sprites which scuttle across the floor blowing up Trilithium Crystals. Once a crystal is blown up they start jumping for joy, refusing to move on until they're picked up and then dropped by your good self. This is, of course, a thin disguise for yet another clone of the ancient *Defender* coin-op. Over the years the Williams classic has inspired numerous games, C64 *Dropzone* being perhaps the best. *Overkill* obviously looks a lot better, but gameplay is markedly less sophisticated. There are more and better drawn aliens, but they lack the gameplay mutations which kept me playing *Dropzone* for years. It's also a shame that the generally excellent radar scanner doesn't show enemy bullets, while using the green button as a reset is nothing less than idiotic!

On the positive side, the strength of *Defender* is such that even a poor clone is very playable. The sense of inertia as you switch your direction of travel is excellent, power-ups are numerous and the action is suitably frantic. On later levels, the CD32's power is used to animate some impressive aliens and overall this has kept me coming back to it far more than many more sophisticated games. ● SSW



OVERKILL

● PUBLISHER: Mindscape ● PRICE: £29.99
● DEVELOPER: TWB ● OUT: Now

1/2 Players

1 Skill Level

✓ Save Game

✓ CD32 Enhanced

Disk accessing is poorly worked out, but at least it was an A1200 game to begin with.

PROS: A fast action shoot-'em-up with that classic *Defender* feel. The promise of better graphics later on keeps you coming back.

CONS: But *Defender* is getting on a bit now, and this doesn't improve on the original's gameplay.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

610

LUNAR-C

● PUBLISHER: Mindscape ● PRICE: £29.99
● DEVELOPER: Digisoft ● OUT: Now

4 Players

1 Skill Level

✓ Save Game

(Password)

✓ CD32 Enhanced

This is only available on CD32 and was written for the A1200 chipset. Disk accessing is clumsily implemented.

PROS: Excellent tactical power-up system.

CONS: Disappointing graphics and weak sound effects leave the repetitive gameplay harshly exposed.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

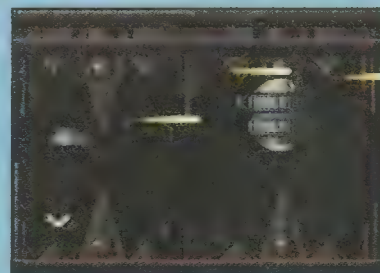
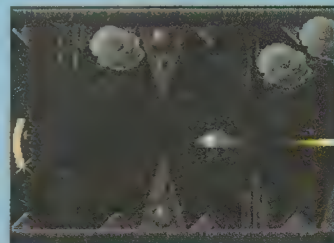
310

If *Lunar-C* has a strong point, it's the power-up system blatantly ripped off from Konami's classic *Gradius* games. The basic idea is if you destroy every ship in an alien attack wave you get a power-up. With each power-up collected, another option is highlighted, progressing from extra energy to various high-powered weapons to shields. However, to begin with you're so slow all your first power-ups should be spent on extra speed!

The *Gradius* power-up system is probably the best yet devised, giving the player a great tactical choice. With this at the heart of a shoot-'em-up, it's already a less than original leg-up on the competition. Sadly, having poked its nose into the realms of good gameplay *Lunar-C* gets chainsawed off at the knees for the utter awfulness of everything else.

The backdrops are plain and repetitive, the enemy sprites move in tired and repetitive formations, so-called mega-monsters are banal, and sound effects are incredibly limited. Rather than dazzling you with new and more exciting alien attacks, *Lunar-C* grinds you down with its tedium. Too much of the gameplay relies on you memorising enemy attack patterns, patiently building up mega-weapons and conserving energy.

That said, enemy sprites are fast and numerous so that on a bored Sunday afternoon you could still get some enjoyment out of it. *Lunar-C* isn't exactly bad, it's just entirely lacking the graphical and gameplay flourishes which good games use to disguise unoriginal beginnings with new excitement. ● SSW

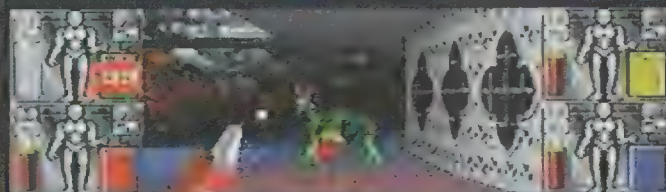


GAME
GOLD

LIBERATION



At the top of the screen are options to rearrange your display, reduce graphic detail, program automapper and use automap. On the left and right are your four droid's stats, while at the bottom is an info window where you can converse.



Ross Goodley and Antony Crowther alias the Byte Engineers, would like to welcome you to the world of Liberation. Happy hunting.

Game playing - Mission 1



HEAD

Intelligence : 40%
Strength : 40%
Armour : 100%
Damage : 0%
Hit Points : 255
Power Drain : 12
Total Height : 28.4
Loading : 41%



Profile

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

910



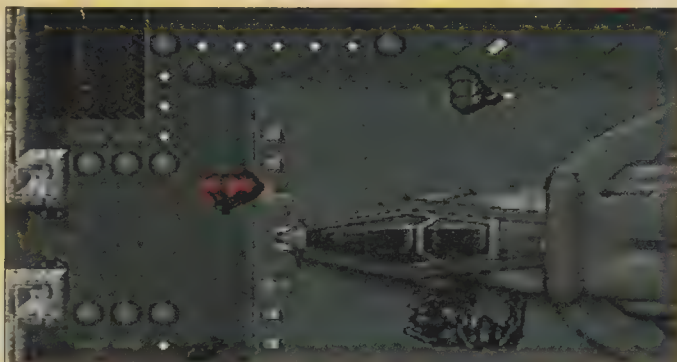
reviews **DOUBLE PACK** **DONBRE BACK**

A string of highly playable hits have made Team 17 major players on the Amiga scene. As you'd expect of the company, value for money is assured with two great double-packs at just £25 each. *Alien Breed & Qwak* (below) and *Project X* and *F17 Challenge* (right).

This was the game which established Team 17, wowing Amiga fans with its digitised speech, rapid-fire action and sci-fi atmosphere. The latter was enhanced by being able to log onto computer consoles, accessing better weaponry, maps and various stats. If you're new to video gaming it's pretty good fun, but veterans will recognise *Gauntlet* and *Alien Syndrome* lurking under the surface. Once again you're dropped into a huge, sprawling maze which you must scurry about collecting keys and power-ups, unlocking more doors than a warden at Strangeways sees in a lifetime. Keys are limited and it's all too easy to use them on the wrong doors, leaving yourself with nowhere to go but the reset button.

The aliens themselves are pretty average, and soon just become a cursory irritant as you frantically scamper to and fro, trying to find keys and power rooms to deactivate in each banal maze. A second player can join in, which adds another dimension, with one exploring and the other covering, but the sprites often end up bumping into each other as much as anything else.

If you've always wanted to revisit the Nostromo with some heavy, heavy firepower and a couple of zillion more Aliens to blast, then this is worth a look – just don't expect much in the way of originality. ● **MCW**



ALIEN BREED

● **PUBLISHER:** Team 17 ● **PRICE:** £24.99 (with *Qwak*)
● **DEVELOPER:** In house ● **OUT:** Now

1-2 Players

1 Skill Level

✓ Save Game

Password

✗ CD32 Enhanced

PROS: Lots of mazes to blast your way through, and in two-player mode everything's a lot more fun. The tactical side of building up your weapons is well implemented.

CONS: But it soon gets tiresome, due to the repetitive nature of the gameplay and the annoyance of continually having to pick up keys to progress.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

710

QWAK

● **PUBLISHER:** Team 17 ● **PRICE:** £24.99
● **DEVELOPER:** In house ● **OUT:** Now

1-2 Players

1 Skill Level

✗ Save Game

A few continues though

✗ CD32 Enhanced

PROS: This is simple yet extremely compelling, and it's by no means a pushover – just a few levels in and the pace was getting too much for me! The graphics are attractive, the sound is appropriately cute and the two-player option fantastic.

CONS: Solo players may not get quite so much VFM as the levels don't vary in looks much.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

8

Although this made its debut on budget, in terms of playability it certainly outpaces *Alien Breed*. For once you're relieved the programmers didn't try to enhance the game for CD32 – why fix something that so plainly ain't broke? There's no silky smooth scrolling, each level is a fixed screen, but with such tiny, nimble player sprites the simultaneous two-player mode is a lot more enjoyable than the cramped confines of *Alien Breed*.

This borrows everything from the arcade classic *Bubble Bobble*, but it makes no bones about it and plays like a dream for it. *Qwak* also chucks in a few imaginative touches like dissolving floors and sudden death aerial assaults to make the action refreshingly addictive. Gameplay is fast and furious, control is instinctive, and the graphics do their job, leaving you free to play away for hours.

Don't get me wrong, you won't be proud to be seen playing this on your £300 super machine. The graphics aren't meant to be mind-blowing but there is plenty of fine detail. Personally, I doubt many people will be able to resist *Qwak*'s simple playability and if you've got a friend to join it's practically an essential purchase. While more superficially impressive mega-games will cause jaws to drop, this will keep you hooked far longer – whizzing about the many colourful screens on offer picking up fruit bonuses and keys like a mad thing. There aren't many games that'll keep you hooked this long on your CD32, more's the pity. ● **MCW**





PROJECT-X

● PUBLISHER: Team 17 ● PRICE: £24.99 (with F17)
● DEVELOPER: In house ● OUT: Now

This has long been considered an Amiga classic, no doubt due to its supremely frenetic gameplay and slick presentation. There's no slight of hand here, *Project-X* is simply a very fast, shiny, horizontally-scrolling blaster with loads of power-ups and super duper multi-angled firing weapons, not to mention some nicely animated end-of-level aliens. Team 17 have gone to town with the presentation and mechanics of this game, with several spacecraft to pick for your adventure (although they all look a bit weedy), loads of aliens and even a few bonus levels tucked away.

Cynics will point out the painful lack of originality, the lack of any special features to exploit the CD32. But as one half of a mid-priced double-pack this is more than welcome. The action is frantic, never slowing down or flickering as you'd expect of a lesser console, while the soundtrack urges you on. Like *Lunar-C*, this borrows *Gradius*'s classic tactical upgrade system. Unlike *Lunar-C*, this looks like it's been written by people who know how to push the Amiga. Yet programming wizardry never obscures the solid gameplay, with sampled speech usefully informing you which power-up is available for selection. This no mould-breaker, but as a classy refinement of an ancient game-type it'll keep you occupied while Psygnosis struggle to add gameplay to their ground-breaking graphics. ● MCW



1 Player
2 Skill Levels
X Save Game
X CD32 Enhanced
PROS: Masses of weapon upgrades, zillions of fast-moving aliens boasting both variety and originality, good mega-monsters and great backdrops make for classic shoot-'em-up action. If this is what an A500 is capable of, we await with bated breath Team 17's CD32 specific titles!
CONS: Not much in the way of originality, or variety in all.

GRAPHICS

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SOUND

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GAMEPLAY

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810

F17 CHALLENGE

● PUBLISHER: Team 17 ● PRICE: £24.99
● DEVELOPER: Holodream ● OUT: Now

Visually, *F-17 Challenge* immediately impresses rather more than Gremlin's *Nigel Mansell* licence, with brighter, better defined graphics and more action packed, colourful tracks. Your car (chosen from three) is smaller and even throws sparks up from its chassis when skimming humps in the road. Unlike Gremlin's rival, spin outs and crashes are also possible and, in fact, all too frequent as you learn to control your new racing car.

All the options from the identical A1200 version are available, including practice tracks, qualifying laps for the championship and a minimal amount of car customisation. Pit stops are fast and furious, and all in all this certainly outpaces *Nigel Mansell* for instant action.



However, the gameplay is quite simplistic and despite its impressive speed it can all get rather boring. If you fancy whizzing around tracks without having to think too much, this is the one to get. But *Mansell*, with racing lines and tuition guides, offers much more in the way of long term value. ● MCW



1 Player
3 Skill Levels
X Save Game
X CD32 Enhanced
PROS: This is one of the best looking race games around, with great sound, super-fast racing action and pretty tough computer controlled opponents to battle with. There's plenty of options to keep you occupied and it's instantly great fun to play.
CONS: But there's no two-player mode and lastability is further diminished by a lack of genuine depth.

GRAPHICS

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SOUND

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GAMEPLAY

■■■■■■■■■■

710



Remarkably, this game is even more complicated, and initially bewildering than its successful A1200 prequel, *Castles*. In that game, the objective was fairly straightforward – build castles, sell goods, battle neighbours and basically establish yourself as the biggest and best Lord of the area. *Castles II* has a more sophisticated aim – to unite the disperate fractions of Bretagne and become king.

This is an enormously complex game, with a multitude of tasks to be performed simultaneously, from sending out scouts and selling goods on the black market, to keeping good relationships with the Pope and Church, undermining neighbouring fractions with sabotage or, in more blunt fashion, conquering them into submission. Games like *Sim City* have revolutionised the appeal of complex strategies like *Castles II*, but the dull, dour appearance of the game and the excruciatingly slow pace of action destroys any of the enthusiasm aroused by the exciting instruction manual. The game is complicated in implementation rather than depth. Whereas *Sim City* has an extremely broad scope of cause and effect across every conceivable aspect of town planning and design, yet was still very easy to sit down to, in *Castles II*, every task seems to take ages to perform – just designing a castle takes a good hour or two, and the game is severely marred by the incredibly slow disc accessing time. Dragging your green cursor across the green landscape (nice programming) takes an age, and whereas in *Sim City* you could slap down amusement arcades and airports and see the city grow and evolve almost immediately, *Castles II* just seems to plod on. At first I was sure that I was missing something, and made every effort to find something to engage my interest, but, whilst I commend the effort and authenticity of this product, I feel that its mainstream potential has been destroyed by poor programming (it really is unacceptably slow) and lack of any real adrenaline pumping excitement. I know it's supposed to be really serious, but surely this could have been visually stunning with a CD behind it? Despite this games overwhelming grasp for authenticity, it really needs to look at some of the excellent strategy games on the PC to see how more sophisticated ideas for games can be made both complex and seductive. It's been done before (even the SNES has got *Sim City*), but this ends up being yet another game that fails to scratch the surface of the CD32's capabilities. ● MCW



The opening stills that set the scene, accompanied by superb, atmospheric sound FX really get you in the mood. Sadly, the presentation and care to detail do not extend into the game.



● PUBLISHER: Interplay ● PRICE: £24.99
● DEVELOPER: In-house ● OUT: Now



See how it grows. Although designing castles seems pretty good fun at first, the incredibly slow cursor arrow, and the laborious task of laying every foundation stone soon becomes irritating. Watching your workers is fairly boring as well.



Profile

1 Player

Skill Level

Save Game

CD32 Enhancer

Even though the disk access is slow, it's still quicker than a floppy.

PROS There's a lot to get to grips with in this formidable package, and if you like to be absorbed in huge, everlasting tasks, you might enjoy this.

CONS: But most people just won't get a hook on this poorly programmed, very slow paced game.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

310



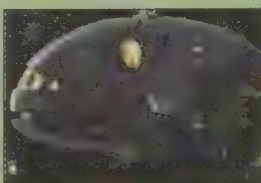
reviews

WHALE'S VOYAGE

● PUBLISHER: *Flair Software* ● PRICE: £29.99
● DEVELOPER: *Nao Software* ● OUT: Now

This gets off to a great start with a top intro boasting slick, scene-setting pics and a techno soundtrack pulled off the CD. I also loved how you get to create your own characters, selecting their names, parents, schools – even tampering with their DNA. This allows you to give your crew a real personal touch, as well as a wide range of skills from identifying enemies to hypnotism and even resurrection!

The basic idea is that your crew must pilot the battered starship SS Whale between six planets, trading a variety of products, fighting off space pirates and accomplishing special tasks on the planets themselves. It is the latter task which occupies the vast majority of your time and sadly it's here the game sags a little. The graphics are fast and reasonably attractive, the control interface slick and packed with options, but too much of your time is spent exploring feature-less mazes. I was also disappointed that the great soundtrack suddenly goes all quiet, limited to simplistic spot FX. Nevertheless, this is an atmospheric, original and intriguing game with enough depth to while away a great many late nights. ● SSW



1 Player
1 Skill Level
✓ Save Game
Password
✓ CD32 Enhanced
Faster disc accessing;
superb sampled speech
PROS: The designers have worked hard to create an off-beat atmosphere which is genuinely involving. Masses of special skills and options and plenty to do.
CONS: Planet-side, action is a bit heavy on the mazes and the interface can be a bit too complex when you just want to hit someone.

GRAPHICS



SOUND



GAMEPLAY



810

LABYRINTH OF TIME

● PUBLISHER: *Electronic Arts* ● PRICE: £24.99
● DEVELOPER: *Terra Nova* ● OUT: Now

Labyrinth is one of those games fated to split reviewers into love/hate camps. It's one of those games where some people will praise the enthralling atmosphere while others will slate the tedious lack of action. Despite my initial expectations, I'm afraid I fall into the latter category. When *Trivial Pursuit: The Videogame Version* appears *Labyrinth* will feature as the answer to the question 'what game had the slowest frame update ever?'

Okay, each frame is very pretty. Although basically an A500 CD game, it uses the Amiga's HAM facility to produce 32-bit style images with 256 colours and high resolution. But pulling these off disk makes movement sluggish, while the point and click interface is less than lightning quick itself. Combine this slowness with minimal animation, a dearth of characters to interact with and an uninvolved plot-line and, well, it didn't get my heart thumping for sure.



If you're the sort of person who thinks people in a game are a needless hindrance to some good, thought-provoking logic puzzles then *Labyrinth* may appeal. There are however some nicely varied problems to overcome, some enjoyably sophisticated, but there's a lot of wandering about too. Approach with caution. ● SSW



1 Player
1 Skill Level
✓ Save Game
5 save game slots
✓ CD32 Enhanced
PROS: Excellent hi-res HAM graphics combined with a superb CD soundtrack provide a truly surreal atmosphere. The puzzles you'll encounter are very varied and thought provoking.
CONS: But it's far too slow moving to really keep you involved, and the dated, clumsy interface drags the gameplay back even more.

GRAPHICS



SOUND



GAMEPLAY



710

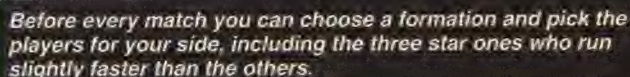


This incredibly playable game uses the overhead view and tricky dribbling style first seen in Dino Dini's ground-breaking *Kick Off*. In fact, the viewpoint here is even higher, with truly tiny player sprites running around the distant pitch. But while these functional graphics may not be spectacular, they are a great boon to the high-speed action. As you can see so much of the pitch at any one time, it's easier to pass the ball to team-mates and plan proper attacks.

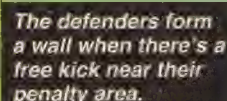
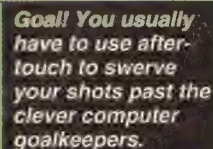
Somewhat surprisingly, only one button is needed for your players' kicks, headers and tackles. Tap it to pass intelligently to a teammate in the direction faced, or hold it down for a shot which can then be swerved and lifted with aftertouch. Press the button while the ball's in the air to make your man do a powerful diving header. On defence, pressing fire performs a slide-tackle which, if mistimed, can result in a foul and a yellow or red card.

Otherwise the extensive options are much the same, offering myriad different cup and league competitions between a total of 100 national and club teams with authentic player line-ups, as well as zany custom sides. One slight disappointment is that there's still no full World Cup tournament, although you can create your own custom cups and leagues with any number of human or computer-controlled teams. Other options let you change the match length, weather and even edit the teams.

At the end of the day, *Sensible Soccer* is still the most addictive football game around, its sheer playability easily overcoming the handicap of unspectacular visuals. Invite your mates round, plug in a couple of joysticks and play till you drop. **● PCK**



● PUBLISHER: *Renegade* ● PRICE: £24.99
● DEVELOPER: *Sensible Software* ● OUT: Now



2 Players
Skill Level
Save Game
CD32 Enhanced

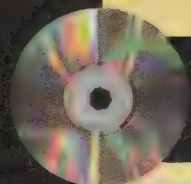
Ball control has been slightly tweaked, but that's about it really.

PROS: Fantastic playability, with masses of options and depth. It's enormous fun and the sound is very atmospheric. It's still *the* definitive footie game.

CONS: But to get the most out of it, you really need a joystick or two. A small price to pay though...

GAMEPLAY

910

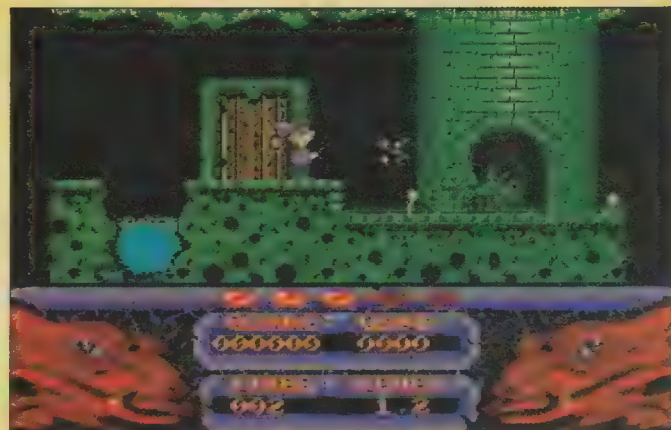


reviews

THE SEVEN GATES OF JAMBALA

● PUBLISHER: Unique ● PRICE: £29.99
● DEVELOPER: In-house ● OUT: Now

I've seen the future and it works. Why? Because they'll be no class structure, no food shortage, no illness, no unemployment (unless it's desired) and Unique Software, the producers of this abomination will be long gone, after having been frightened out of business by a long and successful letter bombing campaign led by my good self. What a future. But for now, look at the present. Imagine a *Mario* variant where the main sprite is a poorly animated wizard who is impossible to control. Imagine trying to jump over two frame ducks and other assorted farm animals. Imagine a mini labyrinth populated by crap sprites, horrible colours and impossible to jump gaps. Oh, and a few interminably lengthy death sequences while the CD reloads the game code. And then imagine the writers of this program printing their name in the back of the manual! I'd like to state that this is the worst game I've seen in my life, bar none, and by some considerable margin, but across the room I can see my irksome editor looking rather ashen faced with a CD in his hand. Oh my God. It can't be. Is it? Another Unique Software game. See you all below in about two minutes... ● MCW



1 Player

1 Skill Level

✗ Save Game

✓ CD32 Enhanced

I wouldn't like to speculate on an un-enhanced version.

PROS: All the things you'd expect from a computer game are there...graphics, colour, sound, movement...

CONS: But they've all been jumbled up and mixed about to create one of the most displeasing games I've ever had to play. Try as I might, I cannot offer any positive comments upon this duffer.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

110

CHAMBERS OF SHAOLIN

● PUBLISHER: Unique ● PRICE: £29.99
● DEVELOPER: In-house ● OUT: Now

What's that saying? The future isn't what it used to be? Profound. Forget that tasteless letter bombing portion of my earlier review. In actual fact, I'm driving up there in an hour with a bread knife. And believe me, they'll suffer before I give them the release of death.

Imagine a fighting game with hardly any moves.

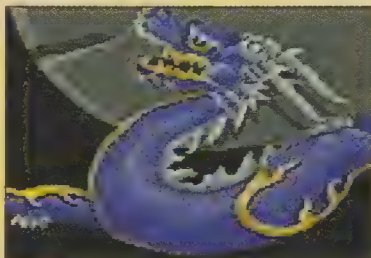
Imagine a fighting game that wouldn't let you perform the moves that are supposedly available, because the pad and game code don't seem to agree on anything.

Imagine a fighting game where your hero is one inch tall and has ten frames of animation.

Imagine a fighting game with blurred, static-ridden sound FX.

Imagine a fighting game that is so bad, it's unimaginable.

You've imagined *Chambers Of Shaolin*. Now that was bad enough, but whatever you do, don't buy the *****. Unique? Expect my mail to be popping through your letterbox any day now. Cheers. ● MCW



12 Players (simultaneous)

1 Skill Level

✗ Save Game

✓ CD32 Enhanced

I'm too frightened to ask if this has been out before.

PROS: The box cracks delightfully when you fling it against a wall.

CONS: Crap graphics, crap sound, crap interaction between the fighters, terrible, teeny weeny sprites, frozen backgrounds, awful disk accessing times, next to no special move combos and poor in every respect.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

110



review

This old seadog first set sail several years ago on PC, but for its CD32 debut a fresh lick of 256 colour paint has been applied...

The sheer ambition and scale of *Pirates* is a strong pointer to the genius of designer Sid Meier, now famous for the brilliant *Railroad Tycoon* and *Civilization*. Set in the 16th and 17th centuries, *Pirates* offers you the choice of either reliving one of six historical scenarios or making your own epic adventure. In the latter instance you begin as captain of a tiny ship, ambitious to assemble your own pirate flotilla. Success will require you to master high seas navigation, long-range combat with ships and towns, first-hand swordplay with rival captains, profitably trading goods and much more, including a little politics, pub-crawling and even romance!

Looked at coldly, *Pirates* may seem like nothing more than a hotch-potch of badly dated subgames and some long-winded strategy. High seas battles are particularly disappointing with tiny sprites moving at realistic, but still annoyingly sluggish speed. *Pirates* is, in short, an awful arcade game with even the set-piece swordplay looking unimpressive nowadays. Where the game still scores is in its beguiling openness, the ability it gives you to go wherever you want, trawling the pubs for rumours of buried treasure, allying yourself with military governors who may give you secret missions. Do well and you may be awarded with land, or even allowed to marry a governor's daughter!

Also welcome is the way MicroProse have taken care to utilise the CD32 for some enhanced presentation. If the scenario appeals, *Pirates* has more than enough depth to keep you playing for months and months. ● SSW



Ports allow you to trade, chat with the governor, recruit crew, repair your ship and admire the 256 colour palette...



...but combat against ships or towns remains almost 8bit in appearance and gameplay is limited too.



Undoubtedly the most impressive combat game is the swordplay which ensues when you board a ship, or invade a town. It looks okay and plays well, but is hardly stunning.

PIRATES!

PUBLISHER: MicroProse • PRICE: £29.99
DEVELOPER: in-house • OUT: Now

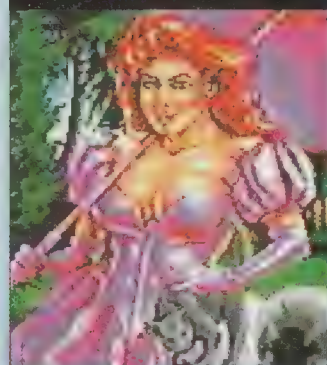


A crow's nest sighting of another ship gives you the option of closing for battle.



"Sad Guy" "She looks like a merchantman on the water, captain" "Investigate?" "Sad away?"

Governor's daughters are invaluable sources of information.



Profile

- 1 Player
- 4 Skill Levels
- ✓ Save Game
- ✓ CD32 Enhanced

A nifty Silicon Graphics intro, 256 colours in game and a brilliant soundtrack substantially improve presentation.

PROS: The sheer scope and openness of the game are still enthralling for anyone who fancies some high seas swashbuckling.

CONS: The battle sequences have aged badly, providing few kicks.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

710



● PUBLISHER: Millennium ● PRICE: £29.99
● DEVELOPER: In-house ● OUT: Now



810

● PUBLISHER: Buzz/Krisalis ● PRICE: £14.99
● DEVELOPER: In-house ● OUT: Now

CONS: But all these options are just icing on a very unpleasant tasting, nasty cake. This has nothing to offer the serious competition like *Sensible Soccer*, and remarkably, fails even to be poor. It's that bad.

GRAPHICS
SOUND
GAMEPLAY

310

ARABIAN NIGHTS

● PUBLISHER: Buzz/Krisalis Software ● PRICE: £14.99
● DEVELOPER: In-house ● OUT: Now

This popular Amiga 500 game arrives on the CD32 with subtly enhanced graphics, more CD tunes than you can shake a stick at but essentially the same game structure. Each of the game's numerous levels are made up of twenty or so screens, littered with objects to collect, doors to unlock and villains to overcome in your quest to find your lost princess.

This is standard, platform adventure fare, with above average graphics, pacey tunes and a cruel sense of humour in the puzzle department. Various characters will give you enigmatic clues as to where to find essential objects but beware, the solutions to problems can be very obscure. Fortunately, the taxing strategic element in this game is matched by a highly enjoyable, high quality platform format that is much more varied, both visually and tactically to rivals such as *Trolls* and *Oscar*. This is great fun, with a superb front end to make it instantly playable for everyone, and whilst it's basically identical to its A500 counterpart, those who haven't previously sampled its engaging gameplay could do much worse than this. ● MCW



1 Player
3 Skill Levels
✓ Save Game
✓ CD32 Enhanced
Graphics have been tweaked and there are loads of CD tunes.
PROS: Very user-friendly, plenty of puzzles to tear your hair out over and all in all a very playable platformer for those who fancy thinking quite hard.
CONS: Some of the platform sections are quite unforgiving. This doesn't really begin to exploit the CD-32's potential.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

710

TROLLS

● PUBLISHER: Flair Software ● PRICE: £29.98
● DEVELOPER: In-house ● OUT: Now

Trolls – there's no getting away from their pert rumps and Punk revivalist hairstyles, is there? This release is a standard platformer, identical in structure to *James Pond Robocod*. There are 14 doors leading to different levels on two floors, all of which must be entered (in any order) before your troll can enter the final, wooden door. There are seven different styles of world behind the doors, ranging from Toy Land to Media Land. There are also a few bonus worlds which can be entered when a level has been completed. Despite the different graphical style for each world, the gameplay remains the same throughout – collect between five and fifteen baby trolls, avoid the baddies and find the Pig Stop (exit).

Trolls certainly has some quality touches of visual style, and some of the levels are very striking, particularly the superb Media Land. But gameplay is repetitive and frustrating, with control of your troll being disappointingly uncertain. Each of the levels are only several screens in length, and the tedious procedure of bouncing around avoiding a multitude of detailed enemies doesn't hold the attention for very long. Much like *Oscar*, this has every single colour lavished on screen, and whilst the minute, well animated sprites are impressive, the minimal variety and simplistic gameplay won't keep anyone above the age of five entertained for more than an hour or so. Cute they may be, but you won't enjoy their antics for long. ● MCW



1 Player
1 Skill Level
✗ Save Game
But there are a few continues.
✓ CD32 Enhanced
13 decent soundtracks, 256 colours and fast scrolling.
PROS: Pleasing graphics, easy to get into, loads of power-ups and treats to get. Troll world has been well conceived and should appeal to younger players.
CONS: But there isn't enough for older players, and the colours soon grate.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

610

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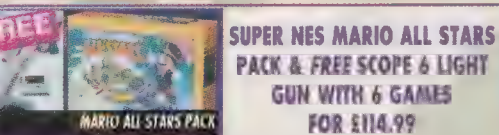
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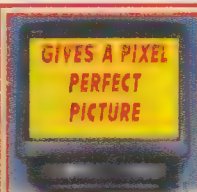


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BATTLE CHESS

● PUBLISHER: Interplay ● PRICE: £29.99
● DEVELOPER: In-house ● OUT: Now

Good games never die, they just keep getting converted. Whether or not *Battle Chess* actually is a good game depends on your point of view. The actual chess game has fallen quite some way behind state-of-the-art, but the animated chess pieces boast some hilarious combat moves and provide an attractive introduction to the best board game ever. Back in 1988 the graphics were astounding, six years later they still look slick and the fights are all quite wittily implemented. There's the Monty Python knight scene, the saucy queen with her bolts of lightning and the rock monster rook which crushes opponents with a single blow.

Eventually, the humour obviously palls and you'll probably switch to the standard, overhead view chessboard, but as an introduction to quite probably the best board game ever *Battle Chess* remains hard to beat.

Options are reasonably comprehensive too, including suggest move, take back move, set-up board, set time limit and a 2D perspective. Worth considering if you've always wondered what all the fuss was about with these pawns and things. ● SSW



1-2 Players
10 Skill Levels
✓ Save Game
✗ CD32 Enhanced
PROS: Attractively drawn and superbly animated chess pieces take part in some hilarious battle sequences which will draw almost anyone into the classic board game. Excellent sampled sonics add to the effect.
CONS: The chess logic is unlikely to provide much of a challenge for more recent games.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

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INTERNATIONAL KARATE+

● PUBLISHER: System 3 ● PRICE: £14.99
● DEVELOPER: Software Studios ● OUT: Now

Before *Street Fighter II*, there was *International Karate Plus* on the C64. A masterpiece of 8-bit coding this boasted three characters on screen, two fun bonus games and superfast, fluid combat moves.

There are those, programmer Archer McLean included, who think by comparison with *IK+*, *SFII* bastardises the beat-'em-up genre with its unrealistic combat moves and less than pixel-perfect collision detection. Unfortunately, the CD32 version of *IK+* is likely to win him few converts. A portover of the 1988, A500 Amiga conversion this shows its age quite vividly. While the C64 game still impresses for its slick graphics and playability, the A500 seems ready for retirement. The background graphics look like the minimally glossed up 8-bit graphics they are, while the character sprites are blocky, small and totally lacking the charm of the originals. Once again the CD32 joystick is more of a hindrance than a help for all the fast, precise moves that are required, but the main problem is the sluggish movement. Quite why a 32-bit conversion of an 8-bit game should be slower rather than faster than the original is a less than enjoyable mystery. The best that can be said is that if you persevere, there is still a classic game of sorts in there and for the moment competition is weak. ● SSW



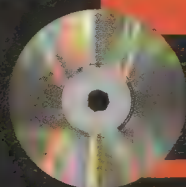
1-2 Players
1 Skill Level
✗ Save Game
✗ CD32 Enhanced
This is the original 1988 A500 version.
PROS: Three characters on screen, especially when two are computer controlled, adds some novelty value whilst the two bonus games are reasonably fun.
CONS: Dated graphics and sluggish movement. After *SFII*'s excellent best of three structure, it's annoying to be eliminated after one poor performance.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

410



review

Although pinball games may not appeal to videogame snobs, the design of real tables is a much-loved art with many ardent fans around the world. Apparently.

Pinball Dreams was one of the first Amiga pinball games to receive widespread acclaim as rivaling a real table for imagination and playability. The inevitable sequel brought in four new tables and has now been especially reworked for the CD32. As you'd expect, the four tables are beautifully detailed with masses of colour, while scrolling is silky smooth and the physics of ball control never less than convincing. Each table is packed with bonus features and the way points are racked up the score-board is excellent, lights flashing up scores alongside satisfyingly authentic sound effects. Hopefully, for the next instalment the programmers will take a look at *Devil Crush* on the PC Engine with all its sub-tables and mini-games, but for the moment *Fantasies* is tops. Pinball fans will love it, and even sceptics are likely to be won over by the glitzy presentation and fun multi-player option. Just check out those screenshots! ● SSW



This ghostly table is one of the hardest to rack up the big points on. Even though it has some of the best bonuses available, it'll take a lot of practice to score. This table also has the best soundtrack - eerie and all that stuff.



PINBALL FANTASIES

● PUBLISHER: 21st Century Entertainment ● PRICE: £32.99
● DEVELOPER: Digital Illusions ● OUT: Now



Profile

1-8 Players
1 Skill Level
X Save Game

✓ CD32 Enhanced
256 colours and CD soundtracks combine to create excellent presentation.

PROS: Four big, brilliantly drawn tables positively incandescent with that 256 palette. The mechanics of play are perfectly calculated.

CONS: We want more tables! A multiple ball option and sub-games would've been nice.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

810



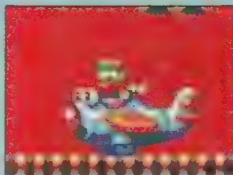
reviews

JAMES POND 2 ROBOCOD

● PUBLISHER: Millennium ● PRICE: £29.99
● DEVELOPER: In-house ● OUT: Now

The original James Pond was one of the first Amiga games to really rival Nintendo for playability, packed to the gills with cuteness and masses of bonus items to reward good play. The sequel was a more conventional platformer, easier too, but with lots of playability and some lovely graphics. For its CD32 debut Millennium have added a cartoony intro, a purpose-written CD soundtrack, enhanced graphics and, would you believe it, an extra five levels bursting with gameplay and adventure! Can the CD32 cope with this much effort being spent on it?

All credit to Millennium, for actually bothering to write a substantial amount of original code for their perennial favourite, and this addition makes *Robocod* a very worthy purchase, even for fishy fans who've already sampled him on earlier formats. For those new to the scene, this is far and away the best platformer available for your CD32, and whilst I wouldn't put *Robocod* up there with Mario on the SNES, I'd certainly rate this as on a par with Sega's Sonic. This is a beautifully presented, very enjoyable game and every CD32 owner should have this in their (small) collection. ● MCW



1 Player
1 Skill Level
X Save Game
A few continues
✓ CD32 Enhanced
5 new levels, especially written CD soundtrack, more colours.
PROS: A popular game has been given a respectable polishing. There's bags to see and it's a pretty tough challenge. Best platformer on the console.
CONS: A shame the 16-bit SNES's colourful backdrops weren't nicked for the 32-bit CD32 version.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

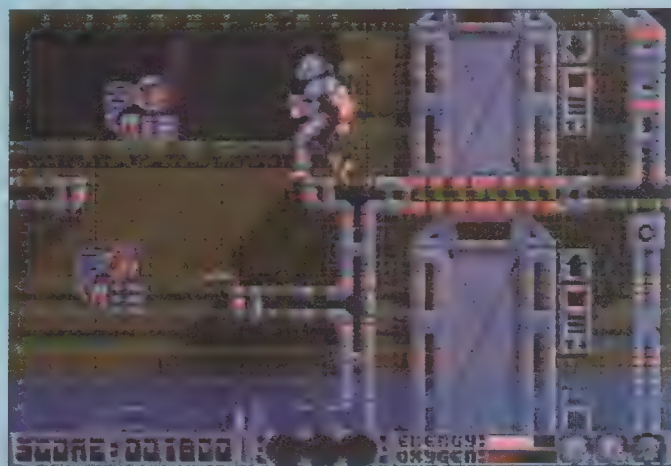
810

DEEP CORE

● PUBLISHER: ICE ● PRICE: £25.99
● DEVELOPER: In-house ● OUT: Now

This rather old-fashioned *Aliens* rip-off looked 10 years out of date when it first arrived on the Amiga, and on the CD32 it remains deeply unimpressive. This is a game only a psychotic cartographer could love; there are nine, largish levels to be waded through, all looking very similar with a retrofitted, Alienseque combination of tubes and hi-tech hardware endlessly repeated across the game. The main sprite is similarly disappointing – whilst reasonably drawn, he's not animated very successfully with his jumps being particularly weedy.

The action (as such) involves you running back and to across the smoothly scrolling levels, unlocking doors and transporting about in an effort to escape, blasting a small variety of robots and aliens en route. Frustratingly, the main hazards are the large doors, which flatten you if care isn't taken. This makes gameplay tediously slow, as rows of three or four doors inevitably have you standing around for ages, waiting for the moment to time your run. The majority of the baddies are similarly unimaginative, banal robots which inevitably cause damage as your sprite is so cumbersome and unmanoeuvrable. Since gameplay generally consists of going from one side of a level to the other, I'd have to say even the woeful *Fire Force* offers more variety in the way of gameplay. There's very little here to tempt novice Amiga buffs, and I should hope that veterans will know better. ● MCW



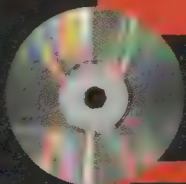
1 Player
1 Skill Level
X Save Game
✓ CD32 Enhanced
More colours, better sound...yawn.
PROS: For people who love trying to map average sized, simplistic levels of little graphical variety, this has it all.
CONS: But the rest of us will just feel that little bit sadder that yet another CD32 release brings nothing new to our beloved CD spinner. Boo!

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

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reviews

BUBBA 'N' STIX

● PUBLISHER: Core Design ● PRICE: £29.99
● DEVELOPER: In-house ● OUT: Now

Bubba 'N' Stix has been met with enormous critical acclaim both on the A1200 and the Mega Drive, original gameplay and smart cartoon graphics winning over all the industry pundits. Happily, I can report that the CD32 conversion is just as good, if not better than its illustrious predecessors. The graphics are cleaner and quicker than the MD version, and the gameplay is just as rewarding. So what's all the fuss about?

Well, forget the story, it's crap. You are Bubba, the goofy baseball hat loon, and you're partnered with Stix – who's a stick. Each level is made up of horizontally-scrolling, beautifully drawn backdrops packed with obstacles and aliens, and it's your job to get to the exit. There are hundreds of problems for you to negotiate, and here's where Stix comes in. He can be thrown at baddies to bash them, stuck into walls to let you climb them, used as a lever to open cans and barrels and loads more. But however many uses Stix has, like a boomerang, he always comes back. The problem is in judging how best to use him – it's only after a few levels that you get into the swing and realise how simple most problems are and how versatile Stix is.

The graphics throughout are excellent, both well drawn and imaginative, particularly the host of strange creatures that wander around and all in all, this is one of the best platformers around. ● MCW



1 Player
1 Skill Level
✓ Save Game
Passwords
✓ CD32 Enhanced
Brighter, smoother, faster level loading.

PROS: The puzzles are very imaginative, and some of the solutions are very surprising. The graphics are great, tunes and FX fine, and there's masses of fun to be had from this good package.

CONS: Pure platform fans may find the problem solving a bit too intense.

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

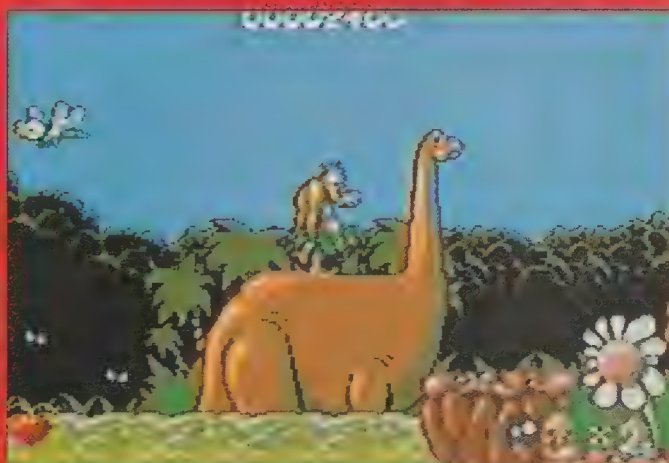
810

CHUCK ROCK

● PUBLISHER: Carkers ● PRICE: £14.99
● DEVELOPER: Core Design ● OUT: Now

Chuck Rock has been adapted to more consoles and computers than Tetris, so it's a shame that on its return to Amiga home ground it falls down. While the SNES version looked gorgeous with masses of colours, the CD32 is stuck with now rather ancient, original A500 games. Backgrounds are uniformly poor and colourless, the sprites are similarly drab, with a very jerky appearance owing to the criminally low number of frames of animation. This obviously makes the gameplay even more important in capturing your attention, which isn't a smart move since Chuck is a platformer with minimal claims on originality: virtually the only novel touch is that you duff up baddies with your tum! Chuck Rock now looks very dated indeed.

However, this is still rather good fun to play, mixing some neat puzzles in with all the leaping about, but with so many other platformers about, including Core's own *Bubba 'N' Stix*, Chuck seems ripe for retirement. If you've always wondered what the fuss has been about over this game, take a look, but don't expect anything too impressive. ● MCW



1 Player
1 Skill Level
✗ Save Game
✗ CD32 Enhanced
Far from it.

PROS: The gameplay of an average platformer is still there, and if that's your thing, you could get some fun out of this largish game.

CONS: Most will be disappointed by the lack of impressive visuals and distinctly wobbly sprites. I know Chuck is supposed to be wobbly, but the dinosaurs too?

GRAPHICS

SOUND

GAMEPLAY

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reviews

DANGEROUS DANCEBON2



Considering the number of classic Amiga games, the CD32 should've hit Xmas with a stunning array of games in the pack. Instead it got this decidedly mixed bunch...

Four years ago, Chris Robert's *Wing Commander* arrived on the PC looking very much like the future of games. Above average space combat was married to cinematic interludes, a melodramatic plotline running through the whole game. Now the future's arrived on CD32 and the good news is that it's a fairly slick conversion. The sluggish A500 version has been enhanced with 256 colours and better sound. The pulp sci-fi storyline is as compelling as ever, while combat looks good with multiple viewing angles and lots of neat touches, such as glowing engine exhausts and tumbling debris. The controls take a little getting used to, but are intelligently organized and can soon be mastered with practice.

There are some glitches, the soundtrack is good but doesn't sound as sharp as you'd expect off CD, and the speed of combat is still less than lightning fast. But the real disappointment is the lack of ambition in the conversion. Sampled speech, photorealistic cinematic screens, FMV sequences and more are all featured in the new 3DO version. CD32 deserved no less. As it is, the game plays quite well, but combat is somewhat simplistic and it all looks rather dated. Hopefully CD32 versions of *Frontier* and *Inferno* will give the machine more up to date visions of future combat. ● SSW



WING COMMANDER

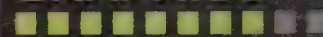
● PUBLISHER: *Commodore* ● PRICE: *Free with CD32*
● DEVELOPER: *E4* ● OUT: *Now*

1 Player
1 Skill Level
✓ Save Game
✓ CD32 Enhanced
256 colours and enhanced soundtrack.

PROS: A classic space opera with a B-movie plot and impressive space combat is slickly converted.

CONS: There's no attempt to rewrite the game for CD32 which is pretty foolish considering how much potential for extra missions a CD has. Combat is sluggish.

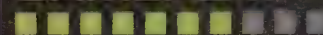
GRAPHICS



SOUND



GAMEPLAY



810

OSCAR

● PUBLISHER: *Flair* ● PRICE: *Free with CD32*
● DEVELOPER: *In-house* ● OUT: *Now*

1 Player
1 Skill Level
X Save Game
(You get 5 continues)
✓ CD32 Enhanced
Like *Zool*, exploiting the CD32 for 256 colours and a great soundtrack can't disguise weak gameplay.

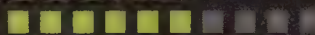
PROS: The graphics are extremely varied and often quite excellent.

CONS: Unfortunately, all those colours can be confusing, whilst control is awkward and gameplay repetitive.

GRAPHICS



SOUND

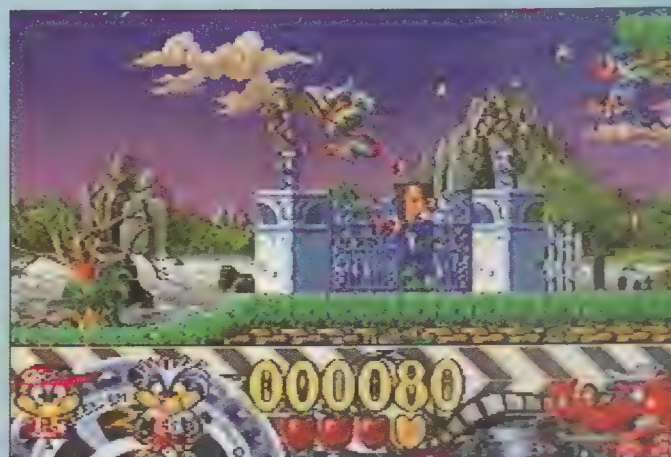


GAMEPLAY



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This short-armed, mop-topped character made his debut on the CD32 with some style. His massive adventure includes seven big worlds to conquer, ranging in inspiration from sci-fi to horror to cartoons, each with some beautifully detailed graphics. There's loads of levels, bonus rooms, and the ability to choose your own path through the game. The AGA chipset is exploited for a full 256 colours on screen, plenty of speed and some nice touches such as an excellent mirror effect on water. *Oscar* would seem the ideal pack-in game, but unfortunately the more you play, the less impressive it becomes. The decision to use 'up' for jump instead of a dedicated button is silly, while those wonderful colours all too often make it difficult to see exactly what's happening. The main problem, though, is the lack of variety. Whatever the graphic style, gameplay is a simple hunt around a multi-directionally scrolling platform maze. If you're the patient sort, there's plenty of challenge here, but for sheer playability *Oscar* is much less impressive than it at first looks. ● SSW



DANGEROUS STREETS

● PUBLISHER: *Flair* ● PRICE: *Free with CD32*
● DEVELOPER: *Micromania* ● OUT: *Now*

Q uite how Commodore came to name its Xmas CD32 bundle after this dreadful program is a subject to boggle the mind. Imagine how a sprog is going to feel when he loads this up, expecting Commodore's equivalent of *Sonic*, *Mario* and *Street Fighter II* to prove just how good his new machine is. By my rough calculations, ten percent would immediately take the machine back to the shop, fifteen percent would simply take a hammer to it, and another twenty percent fall into permanent depression, bleakly regarding Father Xmas as just another mask for Satan's forces on Earth.

All you can say for this is that the producers had more ambition than ability. The eight characters are an imaginatively varied bunch, including people who transform into panthers, fire, solid blocks and even a fat man who opens his stomach to let that thin man out! The most bizarre characters are the two women who look like the tortured fantasies of a spotty adolescent. Their lack of clothing may offend feminists, but for anyone else the real crime is the way they move. Animation reveals the artist's complete lack of understanding of human physiology and is painful to watch. There's also far too few frames of animation, movement is too fast and control is lousy. Whoever put this in the CD32 pack either has a complete contempt for gamers, or is in the paid employ of Sega. ● SSW



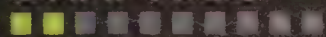
- 1-2 Players (Simultaneous vs mode)
- 3 Skill Levels
- ✓ Save Game
- ✓ CD32 Enhanced

Graphics this vividly awful take full 32bit power to produce, but the CD music isn't bad.

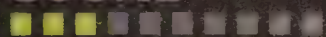
PROS: It's good for a laugh I suppose.

CONS: The graphics are dreadful, sound effects are awful and the control system is useless. If you tried to write a worse game you couldn't.

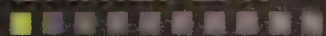
GRAPHICS



SOUND



GAMEPLAY



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DIGGERS

● PUBLISHER: *Millennium* ● PRICE: *Free with CD32*
● DEVELOPER: *Toby Simpson* ● OUT: *Now*

L emmings has inspired numerous clones but it's doubtful whether any have been quite as dull as *Diggers*. The graphics are utterly charmless, the control system cumbersome, and gameplay is mindnumbingly slow. After the brilliant, instinctive gameplay of *Lemmings* you wonder how anyone could have concocted such a tortuous variant. Admittedly, the CD32 joypad isn't best suited to the game, but the sheer array of controls, obscure icons and needless complexity would defeat any controller. The game obviously

has a massive amount of challenge, with plenty of levels to overcome in the pursuit of wealth, and there's tons of fairly intriguing options. If you've the patience, there's a big game here. But personally I found it a poor second to *Lemmings* with only a brilliantly atmospheric soundtrack making use of the CD32. ● SSW



- 1 Player
- 1 Skill Level
- ✓ Save Game
- ✓ CD32 Enhanced

An excellent soundtrack pulled off CD is the one bright spot in this dire release.

PROS: A big challenge with a great soundtrack.

CONS: Cumbrous controls, dull graphics, sluggish gameplay, poor sound effects. This really is like playing *Lemmings* under water. With a fudge joypad. With someone hitting your head with a hammer.

GRAPHICS



SOUND



GAMEPLAY



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910



play guide



Besides being one of the best games of 1993, *Liberation* also boasts a breathtaking amount of depth. Thankfully, Mindscape are at hand to provide some brilliant tips. Get to it!

■ GETTING STARTED

To make progress you need to find someone to tell you who's a useful contact able to help you. If you're playing on Easy Level you're given a few possibilities at the start of each mission. Visit each location to find a character able to help you continue your search. On Hard Level things are much more complex and the only way to start is by finding a newsagent. Buy an electronic report, insert it into a head slot and then activate it.

■ ON THE MOVE

Wandering about will get you lost, so get some directions. The best method is to get one of your mappers programmed. The manual mapper can only be programmed by other people. Usually you'll be able to find someone who'll agree to program it for money. Give them your credit card, then the mapper. Both will be returned but remember to pick them up.

If you locate a computer terminal (there will be at least one at the Library and City Record Office), program your comms mapper with the address you want. Leave the building and locate your taxi on the manual mapper – it's shown as a rotating white cross. Walk into the taxi, activate whichever mapper has been programmed and select the address to be driven there in style. The taxi will stay where you left it... unless someone else decides to use it!

The other way to move around is to access a working street terminal and ask for directions. Remember as vehicles drive on the left you should always start out with the terminal on your left on two-way streets when following instructions. The street terminals follow the one-way system, which may not be shortest route. If you walk below street level you don't have to worry about traffic, but the citizens down here can be just as dangerous.

■ FINDING PEOPLE

It's best to move quickly to a location as people can get bored and wander off. If this happens you'll have to search the locality, the character will never go too far.

When you enter a building to meet your contact there's usually other people about too. The person you want will be noticeable because he or she will be standing still, unless provoked. They may, however, be behind several locked doors. Each key you find matches only the door with the same number on it in that building. If you get stuck trying to find the right key in a building, check to see if there is another entrance to the building below street level – the missing key may be there.

■ MAKING CONVERSATION

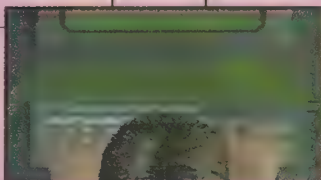
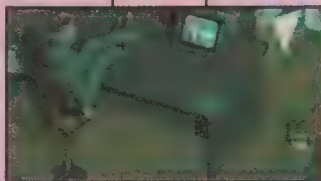
Each time you start a conversation you'll get a description of the character's mood. This is a useful indicator to how helpful a character will be and how they'll react if you threaten them. Shooting a person can soften them up (it can take more than one bullet), but it's usually best not to shoot friendly types. And once a character is softened up, firing again will provoke them. Some characters will give you false addresses, but you can usually spot them because there'll be a lot of "Erhs" and "Ahs".

Shooting people in pubs and police stations should be avoided (unless you've been attacked first), because other people will rush to their assistance. Attacking policemen is always a bad idea as they'll radio for help, but unsurprisingly attacking muggers rarely brings a police response. If you annoy a householder enough, or shoot him, his call for help will bring police running. It may take a couple of minutes, but they'll come.

Policemen will occasionally ask for bribes, but don't bother – they want lots of money.

■ FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

First things first: don't slug it out, use battle mode. Then dodge out of the way and turn to face your opponent. You can get sev-



eral shots in and dodge again before the opponent has aimed properly. Alternatively, run for it! You can complete an entire level without killing anyone, which avoids getting the populace more and more aggressive.

There are, however, lots of different types of guns and ammo. Use the info icon on the backpack screen to find out which are the most powerful. Gunsmiths have good weapons, but don't try stealing them as they're obviously well armed.

If you use two guns, they won't auto reload as you need to have a hand free for this. This option is also defeated if you don't have the right ammo (obviously) or if it's surrounded by other items. Make sure ammo is located on the edges of your backpack.

The ammo problem is avoided with throwing weapons and crossbows as you can retrieve your projectile after it's been used. A sword is similarly handy. More unusual weapons are power points and doors. When you recharge at a power point sparks fly off which, if you put your hand out, will become a lethal energy bolt. This obviously requires good timing and positioning to be effective against monsters. Police also monitor power usage and can locate you by it. Monsters can also be killed by closing the doors on them!

If energy is low, there are some doors monsters can't open. You're the only one who can open police station cell doors. Any door unlocked with a master key can be locked again with the same key (ordinary keys aren't any use as you don't get them back). If you're being pursued, hide round a corner and surprise your opponent – maybe they won't find you in the first place. Flying monsters find it difficult to go up and down stairs.

Outside, climbing a ladder is a good escape route, other than flying monsters everything else has to find steps.

■ CONFIGURING YOUR DROIDS

Your droids are machines and don't get better with practice, but with chips or by being reconfigured. To see a droid's current skill go to the backpack screen and select the spanner. A circuitboard is displayed with a screwdriver at the bottom. Select this to access the reconfigure option. But first, click on the chip in the top right hand corner of the board marked "S". This is the skill chip and the display will tell you what the skills currently are for the head.

S K I L L S

- Bribery:** Makes it easier
- Computing:** Vital for hacking computers. Gives more chances at logging into the police computers and decodes scrambled messages.
- Mechanics:** Enables you to use armour repairing kit
- Targeting:** Enhances missile aiming
- Streetwise:** Detects being robbed and if someone has called the police
- Interrogation:** Makes people more likely to talk
- Brawling:** Used for punching, knuckle-dusters and knives.
- Swordsmanship:** Obvious
- Slug Gun:** All handguns
- Energy Gun:** Laser weapons
- Thrown:** Throwing weapons
- Missiles:** Crossbow and arrow
- Dodge:** Bullets more likely to miss you
- Climb:** Reduces chance of slipping on ladders
- Jump:** Less damage when you fall
- Hide:** Makes it harder for beddies to find you
- Run:** You can walk twice as fast, but already just there!
- React:** Increases the speed you get the gun
- Lift:** Increases how much you can carry
- MultiShape:** Becomes all skills

■ SKILLS END



play guide



Liberation is reviewed on page 31, where it earned itself a prestigious CD32 Gamer Gold. If you have any tips, maps or guides to any CD32 games, feel free to send them in to us, and whoever gets their work printed will receive a free game plus any other goodies we've got! Irresistible, eh?



■ TEAMWORK

A good plan for an experienced liberator is to configure the front two droids for maximum fighting capability, and the back two for other skills such as intelligence, computer hacking. Remember that it is the colour of the button you press which determines which robot carries out an action such as talking to a scanning terminal. So you don't need to swap your droids, just select the one you want to carry out the job in hand.

In battle you can see the level of punishment you are taking on the ID plates of your droids. It's shown as a number on a red splash. If the number is grey, the damage will heal over time (especially if you go to sleep); but white numbers are permanent and have to be repaired. Damaged bits can be repaired at the repair factory — the more it costs, the better the repair. Optics factories are best for head repairs, while hardware shops sell new and better chips as well as replacement limbs.

When reconfiguring your droids you will see that you can add power jumpers and range multipliers. These improve skills but increase the drain on a droid's chest-mounted powerpack. Keep topped up by plugging it to power points. Factories have the most, but remember the police monitor the power supply. The police do this by hacking into the power company and their computer the records of any previous failed attempts to hack.

■ MAKING PROGRESS

Money is always very useful, so why not run for cash? Large value droid stores are usually located within the depths of a house, often guarded. @birds you find can be sold to a trader — but be careful you don't sell objects needed later on in your fight to fly these birds.

Many manufacturers' key rings have been found which are the same as a master. Unstable rooms in droops often have goods which you don't have to pay for. But if you're really desperate, weapons and good technology can be sold to a dealer.

Credit cards are the most money in town and found in bank vaults, heavily guarded so get on guns in a hurry. Borrowed and turned over a bank is very profitable. Some weapons aren't detected by the security droids (ie ceramic ones), but you can always just shoot your way in. You will then have to grab the telepod yourself, activating the console and turning back into the telepod even while it is moving. Be prepared for a major noise.

Once you know the deposit machine, you can deposit money into a bank. You will earn compound interest on any money in your accounts when you enter into a mission.

It's worth buying as many master key cards as you can to speed up exploration. You can buy a master card for each code and for each of the two building types (houses and others), usually from sub-level traders. They're expensive but they'll open all sorts of fast building boxes in a single shot.

There are many other objects you can buy which speed things up. For example, the computer protocol device lets you hack the power computer without having to improve your computing skills. The alien scanner will let you detect baddies without opening a door to see what's behind it, and will warn you of anything creeping up behind you. A video bug stuck to a monster (throw it at one) will transmit pictures back to a receiver. The alien you do catch for other parts of the city as the creature wanders about.

Turn the video bug to each area they are named. You can change it again by pressing the yellow button (a right mouse button) over the info icon in the backpack. You have to enter the backpack via the door code (using the left shift key) as this is how.

■ I'VE BEEN ROBBED

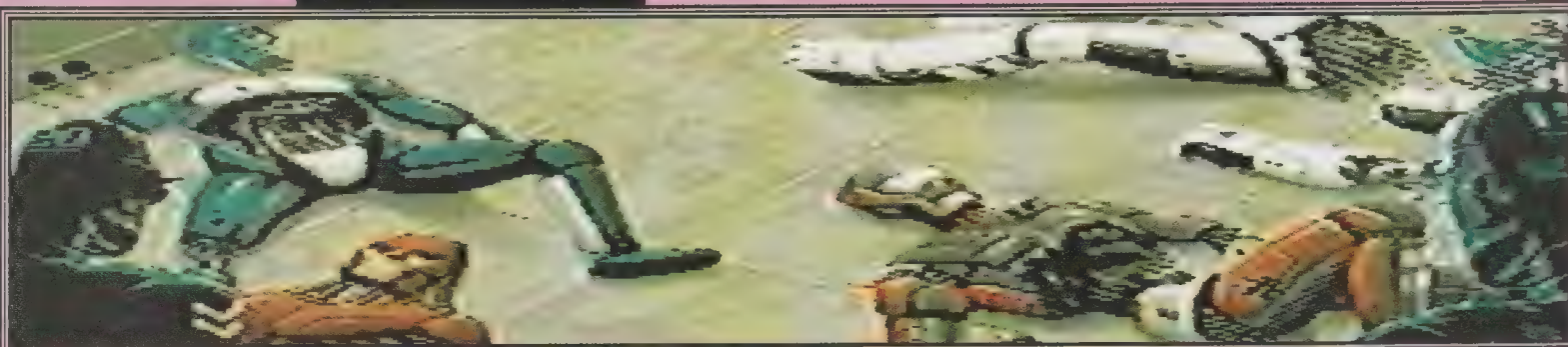
Especially before street wars, be wary of a lot of muggers. They won't attack, just pickpocket. If you're looking at them, you may notice a slight twitch under the cloak. If so, check all your droids' hands to see something's been nicked. Of course, a good pickpocket will sneak up behind you so you won't know something's gone until you catch it — like in battle.

If a droid does notice it's being mugged, the only way to get your stuff back is to kill the thief. If you don't notice what he (or she) takes like, just tell any mugger you see to steal a good chance of recovering lost property, including finding other useful items.

Fortunately, muggers can't steal from backpacks, only what's in your pockets. So when you're dubious, neighbourhoods or bar check cards are essential in the backpack unless they're needed.

If you're really lucky, stuff lying about. I don't always steal, sometimes I'm handed into the police. But being well known, the police are often less than helpful and can be slow and found out by a particularly well-guarded.

PLAYERS CODE END ■





interview

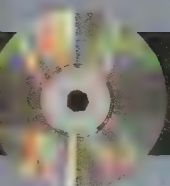
with
D.I.D.
DIGITAL IMAGE DESIGN

As a stricken F-22 tumbles earthwards, the canopy is blasted open so the pilot can eject. Attention to detail is the hallmark of DID's superlative graphics.

TFX

Inferno

The scenario is a B-movie space opera, but gameplay promises to be Oscar quality.



interview

Last year Ocean gave TFX a cool one million pounds to sign them up until 1995. Already, it looks like money well spent with TFX effortlessly dominating the PC charts. *Inferno* due soon, and CD32 versions already begun. Dave Walthey spoke to Charles Walthey and Shaun Hollywood about their plans.



W

What's the CD32 like to program?

CW: "It's very similar to the A1200, which is a very nice system to program on. Plus there's the added advantage of the AKIKO chip which gives us a good speed up. It's biggest fault is the lack of NOVRAM, or fast memory, which would have speeded things even more."

"Overall the machine looks pretty strong, though. We think that it's got a lot more chance than 3DO, for example. That machine has been over hyped and it's no where near as powerful as we were led to believe."

"We actually had a 3DO in and developed on it for a while before deciding that it wasn't up to standard. The operating system is rather slow and you've got to do everything through that. That's the way the Amiga works, of course, but then the Amiga's operating system is a lot more powerful."

What's so special about the AKIKO chip?

CW: "The CD32 is in many ways the equivalent to a 386 SX 25Mhz PC and TFX's minimum spec is a 386 33Mhz DX, so there's a problem. This is where the AKIKO chip comes into play, however."

"The PC has a mode called 'Chunky Pixels', a 320 by 256 pixels display where each pixel on screen represents one byte. This allows us to move polygons and lines exceedingly quickly. The standard Amiga doesn't have a mode like this, but AKIKO can convert 'Chunky Pixels' into the Amiga's normal planar mode. This is ideal for games like ours. In fact, if we had to do it in the normal Planar mode I'm not sure it would be possible – certainly we'd have to cut down the detail level quite a bit."



On full afterburner, the Eurofighter 2000 tries out its internal cannon. One of the most impressive aspects of the game is its subtle shading, notice the smooth contours of the aircraft and the subtle haze on the horizon.

How is the conversion going so far?

CW: "It's looking great. It's not going to be exactly the same as playing the game on a [£1000+] 486 66Mhz DX2, but we're going to try and get it as close as possible. We're working hardest on the speed, to keep the playability. Players will be able to configure the game as they want, turning off the texture mapping, Gourad shading and fine detail if they want the maximum speed. So we're trying to make as many people happy as possible."

How will the controls work? On the PC version there are a hideous amount of buttons to press.

CW: "What we're going to have to do is to multiplex the buttons. So if you pressed down and the red key you could access the weapon mode. A lot of this will be up to the playtesters – they're the best people to decide matters such as these because they're the ones who would buy the game."

Why did TFX do so well on the PC?

CW: "Basically because it's better than the competition! The 3D engine is a lot better and the graphics are simply stunning. We also spent an awful lot of time on the presentation – the intro graphics, the various cut sequences etc. were all used to create a real 'feel' to the game. Then there's the gameplay. A lot of products look very nice but they're exceedingly poor to play. TFX is one of the few games that just isn't like that."

How long did the game take to develop on the PC?

CW: "The 3D engine has been evolving over the last six years – but that, of course, was on a number of projects. The actual game itself took us about a year. We hope to do the Amiga version in about six months – of which we've already done four. So in hopefully no more than two months all those lucky CD32 people will be able to buy a copy of the best game ever..."

Will you be doing more games for the CD32?

CW: "We'll probably be converting a lot of our Amiga games, though at the

C O M I N G S O O N :



moment we're not sure exactly which ones. One we do know about is *Inferno*, which is going to come out just a little later than *TFX*."

What is *Inferno* about?

SH: "Well it's not really an update of *Epic* as many people seem to think. *Epic* got a mixed response – some people thought it was a minor masterpiece, others thought otherwise. The main problem was that it was far too simplistic. People wanted more, a lot more. *Inferno* will deliver just that. This game is a shoot-'em-up, but it's by no means a simple one. There are over 700 missions grouped in a series of environments, together creating a feeling of unparalleled freedom."

The game has generated an awful lot of coverage in PC publications and it's not even out yet. Why do you think that is?

SH: "Because of some of the technology that it uses. We've developed quite a lot of tools on the development of this project. One of the most exciting of which is the 'Evolutionary Flow'. What this means, simply, is that none of the player's actions will take place in a vacuum. Every single one will have unforeseen (but logical) repercussions at later parts of the game. It's a way of generating possible futures plus a narrative structure around the human player that is (a) wholly dependent upon what he or she does and (b) coherent and rational yet in no way staged."

Plus there's the graphics - some of which look simply stunning!

SH: "Yes. What we've tried to do is to blur the distinction between in-game graphics and out-game graphics (cut scenes, linking shots, etc.). One thing that is a constant source of amusement in our office is that you see all these new games coming out with these wonderful introductions sequences that bear no relation to the game itself. So rather than use the swankiest graphics imaginable, we've kept hold of the reigns and tried to make the two as similar as possible. So you have a cockpit view, for example, and you'll find that it is exactly the same both in-game and out. Maybe the out game planets would be light sourced but that would be the only distinction."

We've used texture mapping and Gouraud shading but it's all done within reason. Our main criteria has been that everything runs really smoothly. We've also used depth fades, which really helps to create the illusion of 3D..."

You also have Alien Sex Fiend doing an utterly excellent sound track. How did you manage to get them to do it?

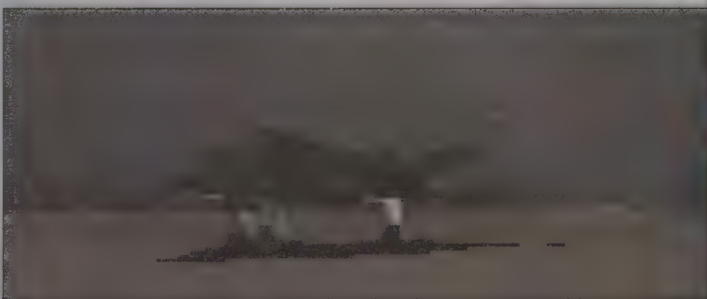
SH: "Alien Sex Fiend weren't our only choice but out of the people that we did see, it was their energy and enthusiasm that struck us the most – they really

wanted to be a part of *Inferno*. It kind of meshed with their ideology – they are into pastiche, kitsch and parody and didn't take themselves too seriously, which is something we're very interested in. As game designers we don't want to disappear up our own arses. And they weren't prima donnas – as people we got on really well with them."

"When we first met them we filled up a 90 minute tape of things like *The Prisoner* and *Thunderbirds*, all the way through to *Trance Dance*. They said 'Oh my God, we've got a tape like that at home.' From that moment onwards we knew we were on the right track. That's the thing with the game – there's a lot of elements of pastiche, or perhaps even homage – there's a lot of fun references to all sorts of things. You'll even find a Space Graveyard with all the ships from *Epic* if you explore enough!" **DW**



While policing a 'no-fly' zone, this Eurofighter investigates an air-line. The UN logo on its tail fin is beautifully detailed.



By far the most glamorous of the three planes you can fly is the F-117A Stealth Fighter. No rear view from this cockpit!

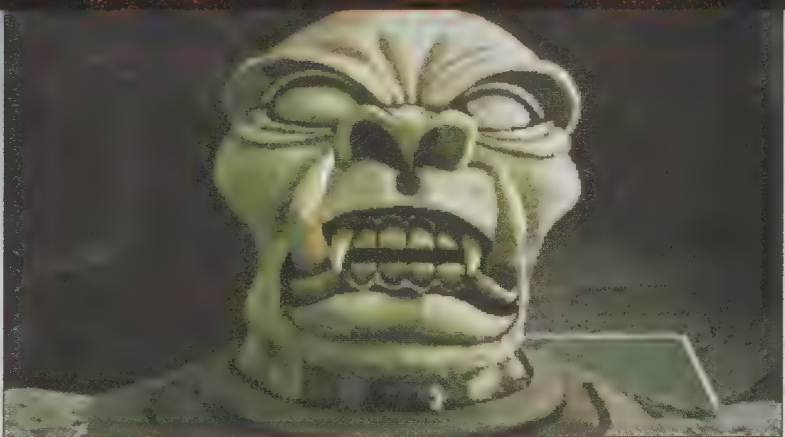


Eject! Leaking smoke from one engine, ack-ack exploding all around it, this F-22 is about to be abandoned.

An F-22 swoops low over the carrier it's just taken off from. As DID claim, while the game boasts stunning visuals, the strongest aspect is playability. Endless hours can be spent zipping around the skies, just playing about and having fun – which is what games are supposed to be about!




INFERNO





feature

 Lurking inside your CD32 are some of the most advanced electronics ever to grace a games console. With scalpel in hand, Jason Holborn dissects his CD32.



This Brilliance-created image is just a small example of the graphic prowess of the Amiga CD32's AGA graphics chip.

INSIDE THE CD32

Even if the Commodore CD32 has been your first ever foray into the electronic gaming, chances are you've already heard the name Amiga. The Amiga has been on the cutting edge of computers for almost ten years now, but wasn't actually designed by Commodore. Initially intended to be a state-of-the-art console, the Amiga had become a 16-bit computer when Amiga Computers was taken over by Commodore – much to the ire of Atari, who also wanted to buy the company. When the Commodore Amiga A1000 made its debut in 1985 it was revolutionary. A multi-tasking operating system, custom chips for sound and graphics, it was simply years ahead of the competition. Unfortunately, Commodore didn't really know how to market the machine. Despite its gaming origins, when Commodore introduced the first Amiga into the UK it cost £1500!

Ultimately, Commodore won limited success carving a niche for itself in the high-end graphics market. TV programs like *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *DSV: SeaQuest* both use special effects created on souped-up Amigas. But it was games which sold the most Amigas. When Commodore belatedly launched the A500 Amiga at an affordable price it was a storming success, becoming the games machine for Europe. Even today, after the introduction of the 32bit A1200 in 1992, A500s remain incredibly popular – quite an achievement for nine-year-old hardware!

While the CD32's hardware is compatible with most A500 games, it's actually based on the A1200 with its 32bit CPU and upgraded custom chips. In some ways this gives it the best of both worlds, a massive library of software which can easily be converted to CD, and a true 32bit chipset.



The A1200 may look somewhat different from the CD32, but you'd be surprised just how much they have in common – the motherboard for starters!

AGA DO, SHAKE PINEAPPLES...

By far the most important aspect of the Amiga's hardware design is the AGA chip set. What makes this chip set so good at its job is the way that the three chips are able to work independently of the CPU. Paula (the CD32's sound chip), for example, can play a sampled sound and even a complete musical score with little or no intervention from the CPU. This is achieved using a very clever hardware technique called 'Direct Memory Access' (or just 'DMA' if you want to impress your friends). What DMA essentially does is that it allows the three chips that make up the Amiga's AGA chip set to access music, sound and graphics data directly from memory without having to ask the CPU to send the data to them first (like a normal computer). All that the CPU has to do is to tell the custom chips where in memory the relevant data can be found and then switch them on. The custom chips then go away and get on with the job, leaving the CPU to get on with something more constructive.

If you've even the slightest knowledge of the Amiga range, then you don't need me to tell you just how great Amiga graphics really are, especially with the arrival of the new AGA chip set. Up until the release of the A1200 and the CD32, Amiga graphics were starting to look a bit sad when compared to the likes of the 3D0, Jaguar and even the Super Nintendo, but all that has now changed. Offering a maximum colour palette of well over 16.7 million colours, the CD32 is capable of displaying more colours than the human eye can actually distinguish between!

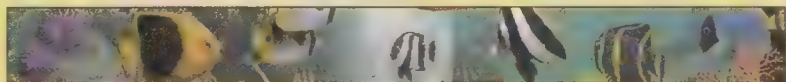


CHIPS 'R US

At the heart of the Amiga's enormous success is how it uses special custom chips to support its CPU (Central Processor Unit). The CPU is the brains of a computer, the place where a program is processed, and old fashioned computers like the IBM PC rely on it to do practically everything. The Amiga, inspired by the Atari 800, has additional chips custom designed to handle graphics and sound. These not only take a lot of work away from the CPU, freeing it up to do its essential work much faster, they also provide enhanced graphic and sound facilities.

The original Amiga had a 16-bit 68000 CPU, a Motorola chip significantly more flexible than the Intel variety used by most PCs. The A1200 and CD32 both have a Motorola MC68EC020 CPU, which is 32-bit and means they can process twice as many instructions as an A500 in a clock cycle which is shorter than the 68000's.

The CD32 is Europe's first 32-bit console and just by the raw muscle of the CPU it could probably outpace a 16-bit Sega Mega Drive. Fortunately, it doesn't have to as of course it also has those wonderful custom chips. When the Amiga went 32bit, the custom chips were upgraded too, becoming known collectively as the AGA chipset (Advanced Graphics Architecture)...



SCREENS BY DESIGN

The CD32 offers some pretty impressive screen resolution combinations too, all of which are 'programmable'. What this essentially means is that CD32 games programmers can actually specify to the nearest pixel the exact screen size that they require, rather than having to choose from a set of default screen sizes. The range of screen resolutions is pretty awesome too – the CD32 will happily display anything from a simple low resolution 320 x 256 pixel screen (that's about the equivalent of the maximum resolution of a Sega MegaCD) to a whopping 1280 x 512 pixel screen. Even the mighty Jaguar or 3D0 don't even come close to this sort of screen resolution.

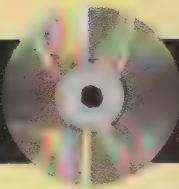
The maximum number of colours that can be displayed on a CD32 screen beats the pants of anything that the competition can handle too. Even at the maximum resolution of 1280 x 512, the CD32 will display 262,144 different colours onscreen simultaneously using its special 'HAM8' screen mode. At that sort of resolution, you'd be hard pushed to tell the difference between a CD32 image and a real life photograph! HAM8 screens aren't that fast, but are brilliant for photorealistic presentation screens. In-game action is more likely to take advantage of the CD32's ability to display true 'VGA' style screens with a maximum of 256 different colours onscreen simultaneously. As any games programmer will tell you, that's more than enough for even the most demanding of arcade games (most coin-ops, for example, still only use a maximum of 128 colours!).

SONIC THE SOUNDCHIP

Sound wise, the CD32 is a pretty impressive performer too thanks to Paula, a sound generating chip that has remained relatively unchanged since the Amiga's release. Obviously being a CD-based games console, the CD32 can draw upon the impressive CD-quality audio tracks like any other CD-based console, but Paula is still called upon for most sound effects and is thankfully well up to the job.

Thanks to Paula, the Amiga is capable of playing four channels of high quality 'sampled' sound effects in realtime with no intervention from the CPU. The term 'sampled' is the key here – whilst most other consoles sound chips are limited to simple sounds, the CD32's sound chip can literally grab a sound from the real world and play it back. You've probably only ever heard sound sampling in action on your favourite music records – most professional synthesizers use what is known as 'sample synthesis' to produce the wonderful sounds that pour from your hi-fi. Perhaps the best example of sound sampling in action (technically, rather than artistically) is Paul Hardcastle's *19* (or should that be *N-N-N-N-Nineteen?*).

Just like a professional sound sampler, the Amiga too can 'sequence' (arrange) sound samples into music. Indeed, every single tune that you hear generated by the CD32's sound chip uses sampled instruments simply because sampled sounds form the cornerstone of the Amiga's sound system. Although samples can be rather memory intensive, using sampled sounds allows the CD32 to produce music that using the instruments that would be used in the real world. It's a big difference from the electronic beeps and whistles that you'd expect from a Sega MegaDrive.



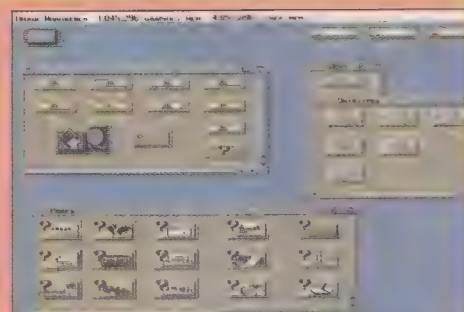
feature

HIDDEN POWERS

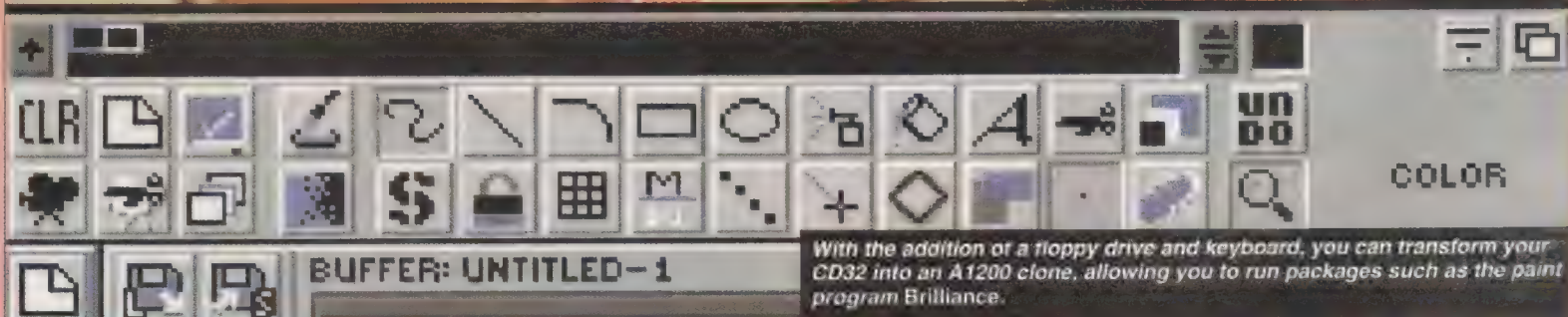
Remember how I said that the only difference between an A1200 and a CD32 was the fact that the CD32 doesn't have a keyboard or a disk drive but is CD-ROM based instead? Well, this is truer than you might think. Built into the CD32 is what the techies call a 'Kickstart' chip (version 3.1, to be precise) that holds the same operating system as the A1200. What this essentially means is that with the addition of a disk drive and a keyboard, there's no reason whatsoever why the CD32 couldn't be transformed into a fully fledged home computer capable of running anything from an Amiga word processor, a spreadsheet (yawn) to any one of the impressive range of Amiga creativity packages such as *Deluxe Paint* (an electronic painting program), *Sound Tracker* (write your own music!) or even *Professional Page* (an award winning Desktop Publishing program).

Transforming the CD32 into a 'real' Amiga isn't that expensive either – just released at the time of going to press was a new product from an American company called MicroBotics called the 'SX-1' (catchy name, eh!). This allows you to plug not only a keyboard into your CD32, but a disk drive and even a printer.

With the SX-1 plugged into your CD32, you can load and run any program written for the A1200 including the Amiga's brilliant 'Workbench' front end. Although the SX-1 plugs into the same port as the CD32 FMV unit, MicroBotics claim that the expansion module includes a pass thru connector that will allow both the SX-1 and the FMV unit to be connected simultaneously. Rest assured that as soon as it is released, we'll be reviewing it in Amiga CD32 Gamer!



Hidden away within the CD32's Kickstart ROM is the same operating system as the CD-32's cousin, A12000.



With the addition of a floppy drive and keyboard, you can transform your CD32 into an A1200 clone, allowing you to run packages such as the paint program Brilliance.

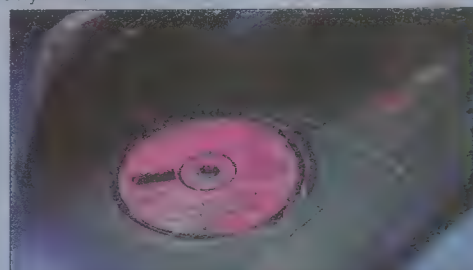
SEEDY STORAGE

The CD32 may not have a keyboard or a disk drive like its closest cousin, the A1200, but it does have one feature that A1200 owners would kill for – a CD-ROM drive. CD-ROM is still a relatively new addition to the Amiga range, despite Commodore's early forays into the market with the failed CDTV (anyone remember that one!). The great thing about CD-ROM is its sheer storage capacity – just a single CD32 CD-ROM is capable of storing over 650 MBytes of data (that's approximately 700 Amiga disks!). What this effectively means is that games programmers can go totally overboard when writing CD32 games as they no longer have to worry about restricting the game to a certain number of disks (usually two – that's just 1.6 Mbytes of data!).

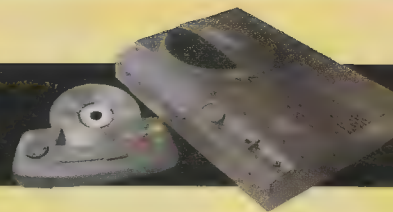
The CD32 CD-ROM drive is definitely a cut above the rest too – designed and manufactured by Sony, the drive is what the techies call 'double speed, multi-session' and its capable of feeding your CD32 over 300k of data per second. This may not sound fast compared to the near instant accessing of a cartridge, but CDs are both vastly bigger than carts (a typical Sega or Nintendo cart

is just 1 Mbyte, or 8 Megabits in size) and much cheaper. 300k/sec is also significantly faster than a disk drive and cuts out the disk swapping!

Of course, the one thing that you can't do with a CD-ROM disk is save your own data onto it. Although professional CD-Rewriteable (CD-R) systems are available, they're terribly expensive. Like all technology, however, it's only a matter of time before prices start to drop to an affordable level. In the meantime the CD32 has 1k of special memory (EEP-ROM) which allows you to save a game position or high score, even if you turn the machine off.



The CD32's CD-ROM drive can pack a massive 650 MBytes of data onto a single disk.



INSIDE THE CD-32 (LITERALLY!)

Just to stop your from tearing your CD-32 to bits, we thought you might like to know just exactly what the CD32's motherboard looks like. Feast your eyes on some of the best hardware this side of an Amiga 4000/040!

1 STEREO AUDIO - These two ports allow you to feed the audio output from your CD32 directly into a hi-fi for better quality sound and music. In order to take advantage of these ports, check to make sure that your hi-fi offers a pair of 'AUX' connectors.

2 COMPOSITE VIDEO - Composite video gives a much better quality picture which can be fed into any television, monitor or VCR capable of handling a composite signal. It's worth noting, however, that composite video does not have the CD32's sound mixed with it so you'll need to connect the stereo audio connectors too.

3 S-VHS VIDEO - For those of you lucky enough to own a television or video capable of handling SuperVHS video signals, this is the video connector you should use. This port will provide the best quality video output of all those on offer. Just like a composite signal, S-VHS signals do not include sound so you'll need a separate set of leads for the stereo audio connectors.

4 RF VIDEO - The RF Video connector is used when you wish to connect your CD32 to a standard television via its aerial connector. RF video signals include both sound and vision, so you don't need to connect up the stereo audio connectors to hear your CD32's output through your television.

5 POWER - Plug in the lead with the enormous brick attached to it and then plug the other end into a standard wall socket, switch on and your CD32 will spring to life.

6 ON/OFF SWITCH - Pretty obvious this one - yep, it causes the CD32 to explode when switched to the 'On' position. Only joking! This switch turns your CD32 on and off.

7 EXPANSION PORT - If you never take the plastic cover off of the back of your CD32, it's unlikely that you'll ever see this port. Despite this, the CD32's expansion port is possibly the most important port of all. Via this connector you can connect all manner of add-ons such as the fabled FMV module, processor accelerators, disk drive adaptors and so on.

8 CONTROLLER PORTS - These two ports allow you to interact with your CD32 using the hand controller bundled with your console. You can also plug in and use any standard Atari-style joystick and even an Amiga mouse (all-important if you choose to turn your CD32 into a full-blown Amiga!).

9 AUXILIARY SERIAL PORT - Commodore originally included this port to allow CD32 owners to connect their machines together for true multi-player action but it just happens that this port can also be used to connect a standard Amiga 4000-style keyboard (bet you didn't know that!).

10 CD-ROM CONNECTOR - We had to rip the CD32's CD-ROM drive out in order to get this wondrous picture but this is where it would normally connect to the CD32 motherboard.

11 LISA - Lisa is just one of the three custom chips that make up the CD32's AGA chip set. Lisa is responsible for drawing graphics onto the screen using her infamous internal blitter.

12 ALICE - Alice is the second custom chip in the AGA chip set. Her job is to handle the building up of the Amiga's screen display by fetching the screen pixel data from memory and then encoding it into a video signal. Built into Alice is the 'Copper' chip which allows the CD32 to change a screen's colour palette (and even its resolution!) at several points on the screen.

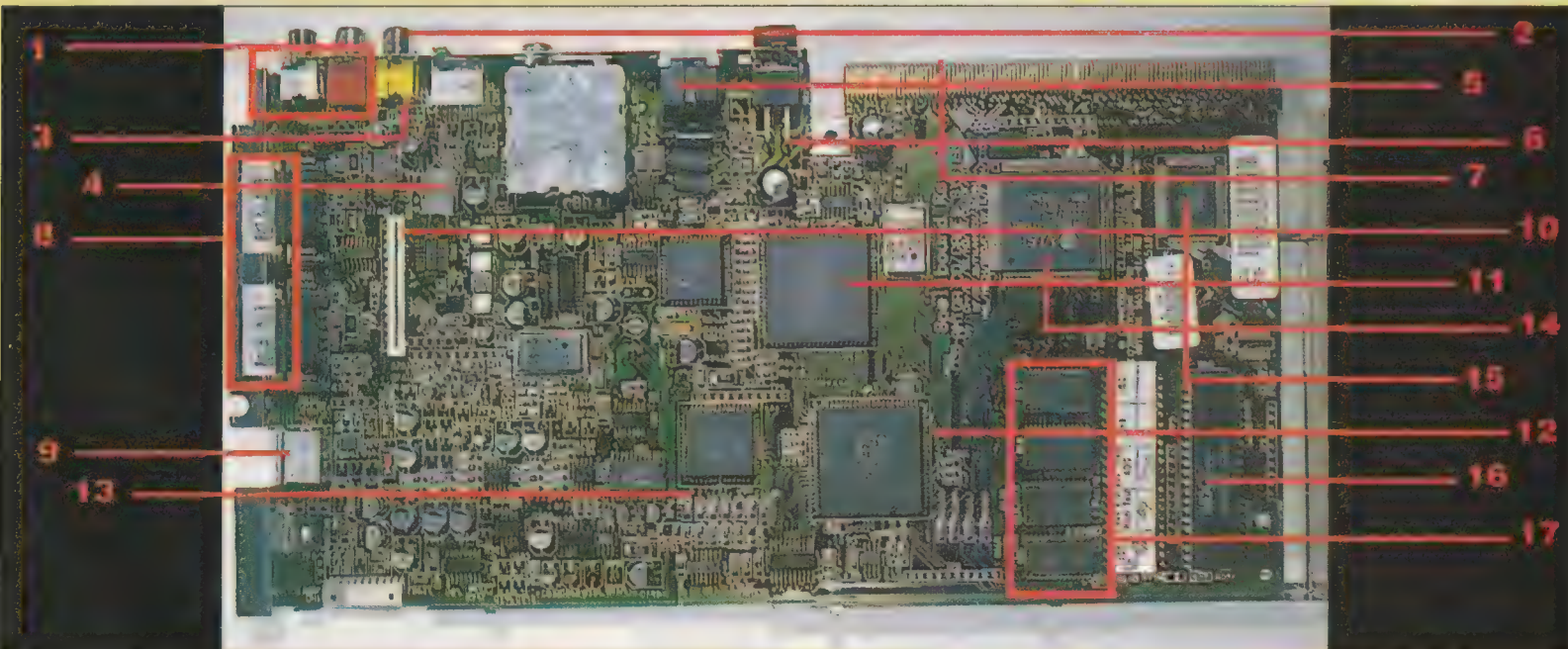
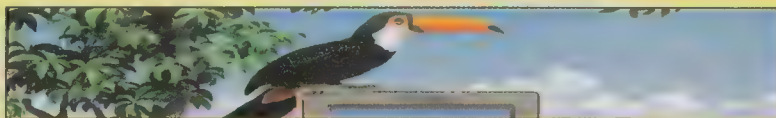
13 PAULA - Finally we have Paula, the last custom chip in the AGA chip set. Paula is responsible for generating the CD32's 4 channels of 8-bit sampled sound and she also happens to be the lady that keeps check on the CD32's ports.

14 AKIKO - Akiko (also known as the 'Planar' chip) is a brand new addition to the AGA chip set. In fact, she's so new that you won't find her in any Amiga other than the CD32! Akiko allows the CD32 to use PC VGA-format graphics without the need for time consuming conversion. This chip alone should encourage games programmers to port their PC wares to the CD32.

15 PROCESSOR (CPU) - At the heart of the CD32 beats a full blooded 32-bit chip - the Motorola 68EC020. It's best viewed as the 'brain' of the CD32 as it's the processor's job to perform all the complicated calculations, run programs and allocate jobs to all the CD32's various custom chips.

16 KICKSTART - This chip contains the CD32's Operating System, a very low-level program that tells the CD32 how to work. The version of the OS inside the CD32 is Kickstart 3.1 which is virtually identical to the OS in 'real' Amigas. There's no reason why - providing you had a disk drive connected to your CD32 - you couldn't load up any one of the thousands of productivity and games software available for the Amiga range.

17 RANDOM ACCESS MEMORY - The CD32 comes complete with a massive 2 Mbytes of 32-bit RAM which is comprised of four 512k RAM chips. These four chips provide a temporary storage area for all the program code and graphics for any games that you load into your CD32.



THE FUTURE

Despite being easily the world's most advanced console when it was launched last year, the CD32 is by no means the end of the line for Amiga development. Already an FMV cart has been released (see FMV feature), and there are rumours of even more significant upgrades. There's talk of an add-on coprocessor to make the machine even faster, while later in the year an extremely powerful new Amiga computer will appear intended to keep the company at the cutting

edge of special effects work. This will be priced well out of most people's range, but inside will be the much anticipated AAA custom chip set. This is rumoured to be already virtually complete and its power is reputedly awesome. It can only be a matter of time before a CD32 II, or even a CD64! appears. All this means is that when Sony, Sega and Nintendo release their own superconsoles, Commodore will be able to respond with something equally amazing - if they don't get in their retaliation first! Watch this space. ● JH



interview

NIGHTMARE DREAMS



Stuart Wynne, H.R. Giger and Mark Scriven (Cyberdream UK).

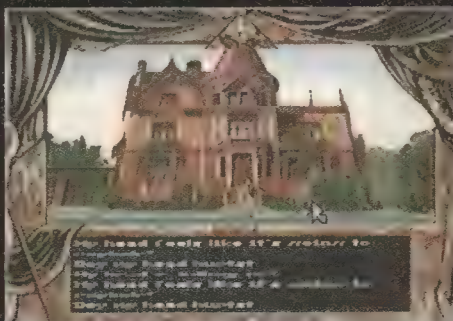
These days no game seems complete without an epic intro, costing thousands, grinding on for ages and rarely watched to the end. *Dark Seed's* intro lasts just seconds, a single screen showing a man screaming as skeletoid fingers peel the skin from his forehead, all the better for the insertion of a foetus. Most video games with aspirations to horrify usually only cause giggles. A game by H.R. Giger is, however, a rather different matter. Stuart Wynne pays a visit to the Swiss surrealist to ask why.



Last year *Dark Seed* appeared on PC and Amiga to near universal acclaim, topping sales charts and winning a coveted Códies award for the best Fantasy RPG/Adventure game of 1993. This year PC CD-ROM and CD32 versions will appear, enhanced by the addition of sampled speech throughout the adventure. It's a storming debut by Cyberdreams, but three years

SEED

Mike Dawson's purchase of a Victorian-styled house plunges him into a nightmarish struggle between good and evil, between the innocent citizens of a small American town and its parallel world doppelganger, a place inhabited by an ancient and dying civilisation which has horrendous plans for mankind.



earlier, when company CEO Patrick Ketchum first began courting Giger, he was met with disdain. The enormous success of *Alien*, and Giger's use of the frowned upon airbrush, has heavily overshadowed his reputation with serious art critics. A Giger videogame? Worse, how could he allow his meticulously detailed paintings to be turned into blocky graphics?

In the end the promise of only hi-res, 256-colour graphics and artistic control finally won Giger over. Cyberdreams were given complete access to Giger's artwork, including the famous 'Li II' (1974) which is used for the box artwork. 'Lifetime companion' Li's classical good looks are a constant theme throughout Giger's work, constantly emerging from his surreal abstracts, yet tragically she took her own life in 1975.

Turning Giger's artwork into graphics was a labour of love for the game's five strong art department. Selected paintings were scanned into computers, the resulting files then painstakingly cleaned up using Electronic Arts' *Deluxe Paint II*. It was a long and arduous process. One of the artists, a man Ketchum still calls the most talented he's ever seen, argued that the entire game – not just the scenes in the Gigeresque *Dark World* – adopt the same dark, almost monochromatic colour scheme. Ketchum insisted a full colour scheme be used, heightening the contrast between Dark and Light worlds. When the game was finished, most people agreed this was the best solution but by then the artist had left Cyberdreams.

Giger himself was perfectionist in what he would accept, he rejected out of hand any Giger-inspired creations by the artists – only his own work would be used and their translations of it were constantly rejected over the most minor details. In the end, an extra six months were added to the already year-long development period. But it was worth it. Giger acclaimed the finished product 'beautiful' and work has just begun on a sequel, due in 1995. *Dark Seed II* will adopt a first-person, 3D perspective with Giger's paintings texture-mapped across the walls. After this there may be a game actually co-designed by Giger, the rough designs for which Ketchum describes as rather heavy on sudden, grotesque deaths. Despite the disappointment of *Alien 3*, there is also talk of yet another sequel as well as a completely new movie based around Giger's work.



Would you like to see your biomechanoids brought to life using *Jurassic Park*-style technology?

"Yes, Well, I mean only if it's so well made that it's believable. This technology in *Jurassic Park* it's amazing, that shows me you can make everything believable, that's the most important thing. Ridley Scott always said the thing he liked most in my artwork was the reality.

Did you like *Jurassic Park*?

"Only a few scenes. The best I like when they come, three or four dinosaurs, one jumping and throwing them away with its mouth. I heard they had people run around to be digitised. Must be funny to run around in park, the whole crew of the special effects!



Virgo Armbinder - 1993

"I think that technology would be good for the Armbinders. You know with the Armbinders, the difficult thing is the movement. The ladies, for example, if they move jumping on one leg. We are trying to mechanize them for the fountain outside the Giger bar. In the centre there'll be a big lady, cast in aluminium... I made everything in lead when I was child. In the kitchen. Then they told me to use water. I had a whole sink of it, then the whole thing vroom! That was an explosion, you know."

How old were you?

"About eight-nine years old. I made different things, tomahawks... Everything was done in lead. I made the moulds in wax and then plaster."

When did you start using an airbrush?

"1972. I think I brought it a year earlier. First I used the airbrush as a help for the acrylic paint, or even before I worked in oil. Then I started to work without help, without stencils, directly on paper."

Do you often surprise yourself?

"Yes, sometimes, maybe with airbrush, because you don't touch with the airbrush. If you stand far away it goes like fog, like mist - mystery! It's amusing to see which way it will go, if you see face, you go to work, to make it deeper. What's the meaning? I don't know. I have two different methods. One way is without thinking, like Surrealists, mostly it's a face or a head or a lady. The other way is when you have something in your head, like a baby, so you do a composition."

Do you ever feel trapped by your dark vision?

"My iconography features quite personal objects, three or four things, always the surreal thing. One painting it started as a kind of Mickey Mouse. Then I saw a series of films about Dracula, so it changed, hammering in like a nail. The painting's title means 'The Staker'."

Switzerland seems very ordered and clean, very different from your work?

"You got that from TV... in earlier times, you see terrible things. In the country, how they treat the animals, the farmers. And I always feel sorry for them."

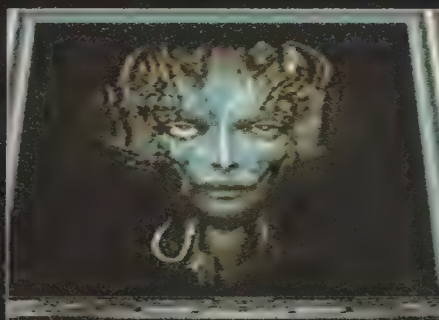
What do other Swiss people think about you?

"They think I'm crazy. They stay away. People are always thinking that what you draw you will do. It's very rare that a murder will do a painting first! Someone once said, we are all executioners of something, but only in the mind, mental murderers. They're only drawings... voodoo doesn't work, you know!"

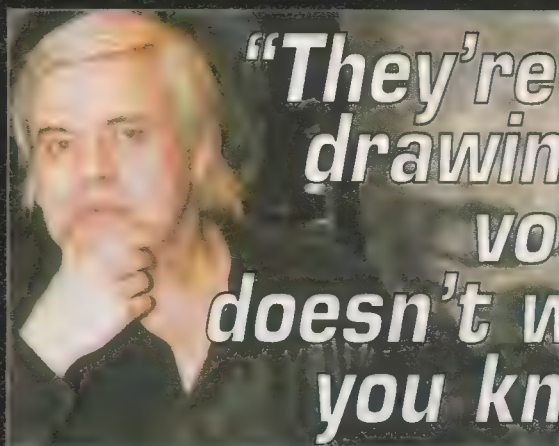


In the Dark World the police make even the LAPD seem friendly.

But not everyone in the alternate world is evil. The Keeper of the Scrolls is on your side.



Failure will doom not only Mankind, but also condemn you to a long and lingering death, forever entrapped in a hideous bio-mechanical prison.



"They're only drawings... voodoo doesn't work, you know!"

Do you find it satisfying to paint?

"Yes, as long as you can do the things free, as long as you're not under pressure. If you do something similar, it gets boring, a nightmare. If you can make, every day, an invention of something impossible, that's good. I heard a painter can do eight masterpieces, the rest is maybe copies or not so good, not so important."

The paintings in this room, are they your most prized?

"No, no. Most are in Germany, doctors buy them. Every artist likes to have most things in the museum to give to people. To have them accepted."

Young people also like them, do you prefer their acclaim or that of the museums?

"If people like it, that's good... Some are very young, but I have all different fans. There are also old ladies."

What do they say?

"They have been young once. They maybe know more about the world than we. They accept the things more than other people."

Do you regret your work on *Alien*?

"Sometimes I'm angry, sometime I'm happy... If they don't buy a painting in a museum because of my work on *Alien*."

Would you do it again?

"That depends. You need more time. Not so much pressure, always running from one thing to another. They filmed my Space Jockey once with paint and once without, because it's not finished. You can see it's much whiter in close-up."

Do you like the film?

"Yes, more now than in the beginning. For the first time you give all your heart and think that what you are doing should be seen, or filmed at least. The whole entrance they worked for months on, but not shown for a minute."

Is it your favourite of the *Alien* movies?

"Yes, The second one, in the beginning, I didn't think much of. Too much war. Now I think it's wonderful."

You worked briefly on *Aliens III*. What do you think of it?

"I don't want to talk about the third one. I think we couldn't make it worse, but better."

Will there be an *Alien 4*?

"Yes, they're working on it now. They never tell me when they begin an *Alien* film. I would be the last to know."

There have been a great many computer games which have been 'inspired' by your artwork. What do you think when people use your designs like that?

"In one way it's nice to be copied, in another way it's probably not so. If there's too much, it cheapens my work, they always see the same thing."

But however many copies appear, they never seem as good. Why is this?

"They should make it better and then I would be nervous! [Laughs] It very rarely happens... It's not so important how to do it, as what it is." ● SSW

■ An extended version of this interview will appear in the next PC POWER, on sale 14th April.

REVIEWS

COMING TO A CD32 NEAR YOU...



After a near-disastrous start, CD32 software support is now picking up quite a head of steam with almost all major publishers planning lots of exciting releases.

21ST CENTURY

After the success of their pinball games, the company which rose from the ashes of Hewson is finally branching out a bit. An as yet unnamed CD32 specific platformer is planned for Xmas.

ACID SOFTWARE

Guardian

Although it's unlikely to have the variety of its inspiration, Nintendo's *Starwing*, it will have complete freedom of movement and lots more speed – thanks to 32-bit power. All in all, a much anticipated shoot 'em up which should finally show a little of what the machine is truly capable of.

Out: April
Skidmarks

An overhead-view racer in the *Super Off-Road Racing* style with masses of playability.

Out: April

ALTERNATIVE SOFTWARE

Dennis & Gnasher

The *Beano* heroes appear in a platformer likely to be a bit more brutal than Ocean's movie-inspired *Dennis*.

Out: March

Tracksuit Manager '94

This ancient classic keeps marching on, offering every arm-chair enthusiast the chance to show his friends just how a football team really should be managed.

Out: March

ANCO

Super Kick Off 3

The mother of all football games, the first really playable Amiga football sim, takes on an all new look for its third outing. A side-on perspective replaces the old overhead view, with some big, impressive sprites and neat sub-games where you practice your skills. Initial impressions are extremely favourable.

Out: May/June

APACHE SOFTWARE

Super Methane Brothers

Drawing obvious inspiration from classic coin-ops such as *Bubble Bobble* and *Rodland*, this looks simple but plays great with plenty of bonus items. The CD32 version has AGA graphics and CD sound.

Out: March



AUDIOGENIC

Bubble and Squeak

One of the UK's oldest software houses tries its hand, yet again, at one of the oldest game types – yet another platformer!

Out: March

Exile

This huge arcade adventure has your astronaut hero jet-packing through various labyrinthine mazes. Quite a hit some years back, it's currently being rewritten to exploit CD32 with upgraded graphics.

Out: Summer

Football Game

A big-name licence is planned for them, but who exactly is going to have his mug plastered across the cover is yet to be revealed.

Out: Easter

Graham Gooch Cricket

Since old Graham's been consigned off, this licence isn't quite what it was, but the actual game is a solid enough sim.

Out: Summer

Super Loopz

A fun arcade-puzzler for one or two players.

Out: April/May

CODEMASTERS

Captain Dynamo

A simplistic platformer, but attractively presented with some nice touches. At just £12.99 it's well worth a look.

Out: March

Micro Machines 2

The hugely successful toy car racing game spawns a state-of-the-art sequel, being developed with CD very much in mind.

Out: Xmas

Psycho Pinball

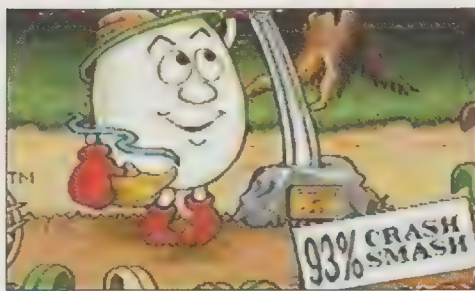
Codemaster's venture into the world of steel balls and flashy lights is their second title designed to exploit CD.

Out: Xmas

Ultimate Dizzy (Working Title)

The phenomenal Dizzy comes to CD32 in the mother of all compilations – no less than 10 Dizzy games on one silvery disk. Classic arcade adventure action for just £20.

Out: Summer



CORE DESIGN

Premiere

Set in a Hollywood movie studio, with various films providing level backdrops for, you guessed it, yet another cute Core platformer.

Out: March

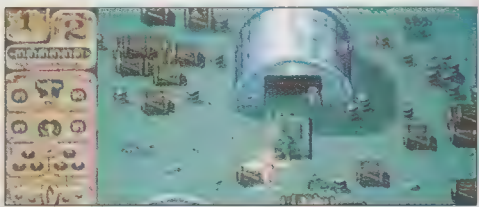
Skeleton Krew

This isometric 3D shoot 'em up is CD32 specific and looks absolutely gorgeous. One to watch out for.

Out: June

Banshee

This is a vertically-scrolling shoot 'em up in the classic 1942-style. Out: May.



CYBERDREAMS

Dark Seed

The dark, atmospheric adventure, based on HH Giger's work, is fully previewed elsewhere in this ish.

Out: June

DAZE

Stardust

The gobsmacking *Anger* shoot 'em up with awesome graphics and good *Asteroids*-style gameplay is bound to wait on CD32.

Out: April

ELECTRONIC ARTS

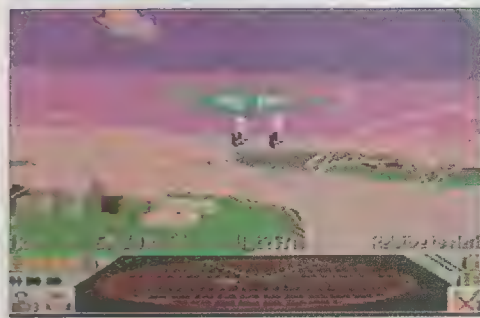
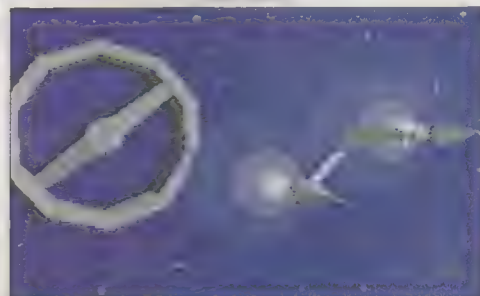
EA is taking a very cautious line with CD32, due, in part, to its heavy commitment to 3DO. Currently the only games being considered for conversion are Bullfrog's excellent cyberpunk RPG shoot 'em up *Syndicate* and forthcoming aquatic adventure *Biosphere*.

GAMETEK

Elite II: Frontier

One of the games of 1984, this mammoth space opera may have been a bit soft on the A500, but really flew on the A1200 running over five times as fast. The CD32 game is based on a new, A1200-specific version with minor gameplay tweaks. Whether or not there'll be any texture mapping is still to be decided, but this is certain to be a must-buy game.

Out: April



Humans I & II

Imagitec's humorous *Lemmings* clones join forces for a double-pack with plenty of fastability.

Out: April

FLAIR

Summer Olympics

This cutesy compilation of sports games is to be released at a mid-price point of £19.99.

Out: March

Surf Ninjas

...as is this cute beat 'em up.

Out: March

GREMLIN *D-Hero*

Six levels of horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up action – take on the alien invaders one more time.

Out: Spring.

Legacy of Soracil

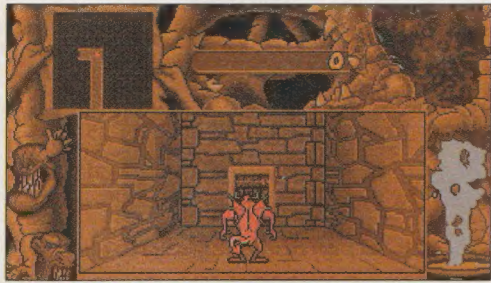
A massive RPG with attractive isometric graphics, eight characters to pick from for your team, and ten epic quests.

Out: April/May

Litil Divil

Absolutely ages in development, this was very much designed with CD in mind. Masses of sub-games and brilliant Warner Bros-style animation make this a much anticipated release.

Out: Summer.



Zool 2

More platformy japey by the alien ninja, this time joined by his girlfriend Zooz who you can control for a change.

Out: Spring.

GRANDSLAM *Beavers*

Yet another super cute platformer.

Out: Spring.

Liverpool FC

The team may be having its problems, but Grandslam are confident their game will put them back at the top of the league.

Out: Spring

ICE

Akira

The game of the epic Japanese anime movie. Expect lots of stylish bikes and violence.

Out: Summer.

Gulp

Yet another platformer from the Ice stable.

Out: April.

Total Carnage

The coin-op sequel to *Smash TV* belatedly appears on CD32. An overhead, scrolling blast-'em-up for one or two commandos, the original is one of the most intense games of its type.

Out: Easter

INTERPLAY

The Lost Vikings

One of the best arcade puzzle games ever is to be ported over, sadly without AGA enhancement, but still unmissable.

Out: April.

KRISALIS

Man United Premier League Champions

The team of the moment come to CD32, with plenty of digitized piccies streamed off the disk to make for super-slick presentation.

Out: April.

Sabre Team

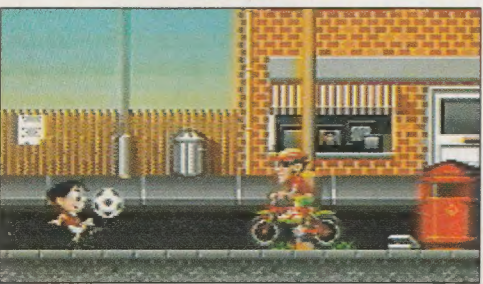
A fun overhead-view, isometric arcade-adventure putting you in command of a squad of SAS men 'neutralising' some terrorists.

Out: March.

Soccer Kid

A platformer with a difference: your hero's weapon is a football with which he can perform some amazing stunts. Easily one of the Amiga's top platformers.

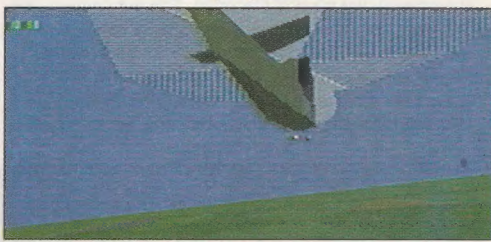
Out: April.



MICROPROSE *Gunship 2000*

Military sims like this have always been MicroProse's speciality and this is one of their very best. There's six copters to choose from, a flight of helicopters to command and some very fast, very slick graphics. Don't miss it!

Out: Spring/Summer.



Impossible Mission 2049

The ancient C64 classic has been comprehensively updated with rotoscoped animation, a choice of three characters and plenty of power-ups – including a jetpack!

Out: May.

MILLENNIUM

Brutal Sports Football

An amusing and very playable super-violent, futuristic version of rugby crossed with football and all-out genocide.

Out: March.

Brutal Sports Soccer

Yet more violence, this time with a more round-shaped ball as the excuse.

Global Effect

Less gruesome violence, more jumping about in yet another platformer.

Out: March.

James Pond III

Everyone's favourite fish returns for yet more platform frolics.

Out: Early May.

Pinky

Cutesy, cartoon-style platform fun.

Out: Late May.

MINDSCAPE

Evasive Action

The idea of this game is to take all the exciting bits out of air combat sims, like dog-fighting and aerial stunts, while losing all the boring sim bits. There's four time periods to play in (WWI, WWII, Modern War and Space War), plus a great two-player split-screen mode.

Out: Autumn.



Fury of the Furries

This excellent and very funny arcade puzzler boasts over 100 levels to test both reactions and brains.

Out: Soon.



MegaRace

Get ready for one of the most stunning intros yet seen, while in-game action looks almost as spectacular with fantastic background graphics being streamed off CD. The shoot-'em-up racing action is simplistic, but could be fun.

Out: October.

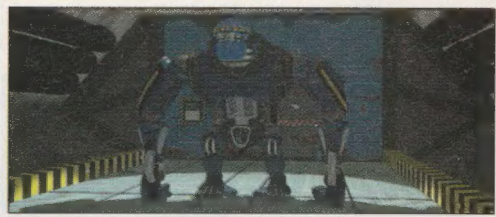


MIRAGE

Rise Of The Robots

Ever since this showed its face at last year's ECTS, *Robots* has been earning acres of preview space. The format may not be original – *Street Fighter II* with robots – but the gorgeous 3D raytraced graphics are absolutely stunning. The big question remains unanswered however, will this mega-game really play as well as it looks?

Out: Summer.



Adrenalin Factor

This is an adventure game based on the same graphics technology as *Rise Of The Robots* and is guaranteed to be even more impressive!

Out: Winter 1994.

OCEAN

There are few software houses with more Amiga classics in their back catalog than Ocean. One of the most mouth-watering CD32 prospects of the year has to be a *Rainbow Islands* collection with *Bubble Bobble*, *Rainbow Islands* and *Parasol Stars*. Or how about a conversion of the mega-rated *Ryder Cup Golf*, or *RoboCop III*? Unfortunately, the Mancunian giant is in slow-mo mood at the moment, awaiting complex negotiations to be completed before anything definite can be announced. As yet, the only two certainties are the awesome *TFX* and *Inferno* (see pages 56-57).

PSYGNOSIS

The company which, more than any other, made the Amiga A500 such a success has a big catalogue of games which should be appearing on silver disk later this year, beginning with...

Second Samurai

An attractively present platformer with plenty of action and puzzles.

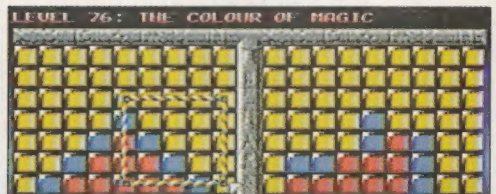
Out: Spring.

RASPUTIN

Clockwiser

This fun arcade-puzzler is being developed simultaneously for A1200 and CD32, the big difference being the number of levels – 110 boosted to a stunning 500 for CD!

Out: April.



Harry The Hairy Hermit

Yet another cutesy platformer, but at least the name's original!

Out: Summer.



Jetstrike

This simplistic, but highly playable shoot-'em-up is being heavily rewritten for CD32 with enhanced AGA graphics, twice as many aircraft (80), weapons (80) and missions (200).

Out: April.

RENEGADE

Fire and Ice

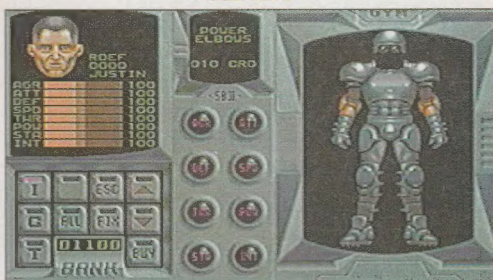
A sophisticated platformer where you play a coyote!

Out: April.

Speedball II

Easily the best Bitmap Bros game and undoubtedly one of the best Amiga games ever, this *Rollerball*-style future-sport game is absolutely excellent. Supremely violent, fast and original.

Out: TBA.



The Chaos Engine

Another Bitmap Bros game, this one with an imaginative steampunk setting. It's basically a variation on the *Gauntlet* theme, an overhead view blast-'em-up cum maze game with added strategy bits.

Out: April



Uridium 2

At last the CD32 gets a good shoot-'em-up with this solid Amiga game significantly updated for the new format.

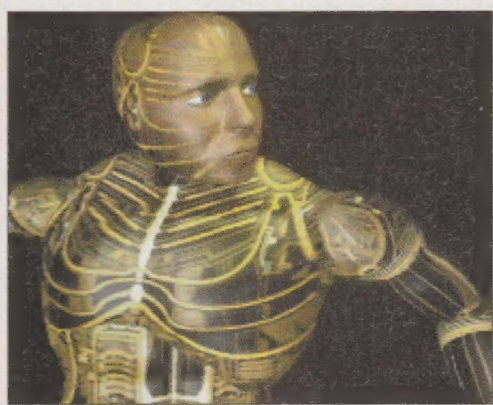
Out: May.

SCI

The Lawnmower Man

Already a big hit on PC CD-ROM, this state-of-the-art release boasts some of the most impressive computer graphics yet seen. The game is actually a compilation of sub-games and while gameplay isn't overly sophisticated, the awesome soundtrack and great visuals add up to an overwhelming experience.

Out: Autumn.



SUPERVISION

Donk

This fun platformer received a warm welcome on its original release, and is now being toned up for CD32 with a great new soundtrack. The game boasts 112 levels, all of which can be played split-screen if you've got a buddy to play with.

Out: March.

Fist

This RPG is based on an old Steve Jackson game and the soundtrack is said to be awesome.

Out: Summer.

Lovers Guide

The game of the book of the video. This educational title debuted on the PC with some rather grainy FMV illustrating various sexual positions. The CD32 version will have sharper imagery – Supervision are considering adapting it for the FMV module – but you'll have to be 18 to giggle at the schoolteacher-style voice-over and hilarious quiz.

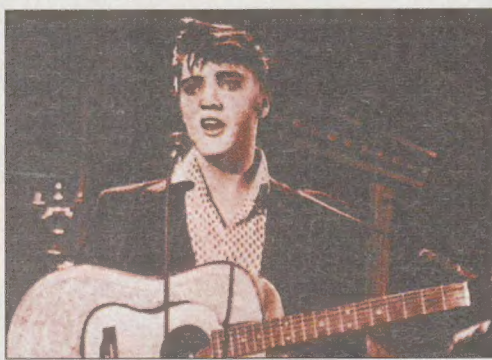
Out: Autumn.



The Rock 'N' Roll Decades

The first release in this series covers the '50s, with three more to follow covering the '60s, '70s and '80s/'90s. Each disk is split into four parts, with US/UK charts for every week in the decade, 30 minutes of video footage, a trivia quiz and ten full songs. At a modest £24.99 it's good fun.

Out: March.



SYSTEM 3

Firm supporters of CD32, System 3 are converting most of their past hits to the format for a mouth-watering £14.99, while new releases such as *Putty Squad* are being designed to exploit the machine more fully later on.

Flimbo's Quest

A cutesy platformer which should appeal to younger players.

Out: March.

Myth

A very stylish arcade-adventure based on Greek mythology. No longer state-of-the-art, but well worth a look.

Out: March.

Ninja III

A classic isometric arcade-adventure of the old school.

Out: March

Putty Squad

This arcade-puzzler is being developed as an A1200/CD32-only release and is bound to look absolutely stunning. Unlike most sequels, this will be radically different from the original game with some great new morphing effects.

Out: August.

Tong Dynasty (Working title)

This ambitious project, developed specifically for the CD32, aims to combine a *Ninja III*-style arcade adventure with close-in combat sequences to rival *Street Fighter II*.

Out: Winter 1994.

TEAM 17

Body Blows Galactic

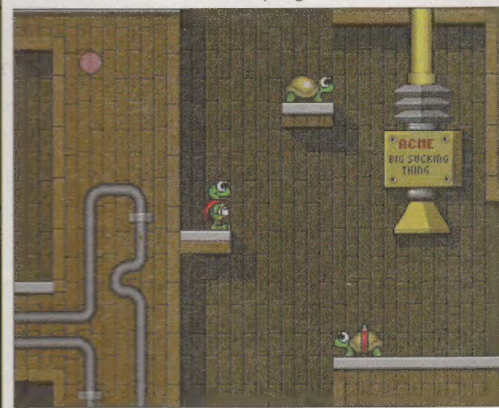
The ultimate Amiga beat-'em-up gets a host of new features for its CD32 debut. More characters, more moves, more gameplay.

Out: March

Superfrog

One of the Amiga's top platformers bounds onto CD32.

Out: Spring.



THALION

Lionheart

This stylish platformer has some of the most vivid graphics seen on an A500, and is to be fully upgraded for CD32.

Out: 7th May.

No Second Prize

A top motorbike race game gets even faster on CD32.

Out: April.

TITUS

Lamborghini American Challenge

A simplistic, but still fun racer with the added attraction of being able to place bets on your races with other competitors.

Out: March.

VIRGIN

After an initially cautious reaction to the machine, Virgin are becoming more positive and are actively considering converting a selection of their top Amiga titles, including games like *Beneath A Steel Sky*. At the moment though, all that's definite is *Saurus* (a multimedia dinosaurs project), a game by Revolution for 1995 and...

Cannon Fodder

This brilliant overhead-view war game caused a tabloid sensation with its 'war is fun' advertising, but rave reviews followed and this is bound to be one of the most anticipated CD32 releases of the year. As yet, major enhancements are limited to a password system - because of limited space for save games - and you'll probably need a mouse to get the most out of it.

Out: 1st October.





SURE NINJAS

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CHAMPIONSHIP

GOLF



9/10
"CD32 GAMER"

90%
"THE ONE
AMIGA"

9/10
PLATINUM AWARD
"AMIGA PRO & 32"

AMIGA CD³²

Commodore



**CAN YOU BEAT NICK FALDO AT HIS OWN GAME IN THIS
STATE-OF-THE-ART GOLF SIMULATION?**



ACTUAL SCREENSHOTS